

THE FORTUNES OF THE HOUSE OF FOIX.

THE FATAL GIFT.

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It was at an early hour, on a calm, beautiful morning of the first month of autumn, that a gay cavalcade was assembled before the gates of the royal castle in the old town of Pampeluna, at that time the capital of the King of Navarre, better known, in those days, by his well-earned sobriquet of Charles the Bad. All the pomp and magnificence of the most gorgeous and romantic period of the world's history was displayed in the garbs of the cavaliers, in the housings of the fiery horses, in the long train of pages and esquires, glittering with gold and silver, in the escort of men-at-arms, sheathed *cap-a-pie* in burnished steel, every lance decorated with its waving pennoncelle, and a square banner prominent over all, emblazoned with the proud bearings of the Counts of Foix, in right of their descent from the kings of Arragon, or a pale gules: well known on many a battle field of France and Spain; well known to the pagan hordes of Prussia; well known to the base Jacquerie, what time, beneath its folds, thirty-five cavaliers, led by the capital and the count, slew with the sword's edge seven thousand villeins before the market-place of Meaux!

But it was on no hostile errand that the proud banner was now floating upon the breezes of Navarre—it was not as invaders that the chivalry of Bearn were mustered in the courts of Pampeluna.

For many a year, there had been strife between Gaston Phebus, the great Count of Foix, the flower of chivalry, who, though a simple count, was mightier than puissant monarchs of his day, and his fair dame, so well beloved of old,—the famous beauty of Navarre, sister of the Bad King, through whose ill faith and treachery it was that dissension had marred true love, and those had been parted whom God joined together, and no man should have put asunder.

For many a year there had been strife, and though in the high hall of Orthès, the state of the count had been kept up with all its wonted splendour; though his power had increased, and his fame been spread abroad wherever trumpets rang or minstrels chaunted, his hearth had been desolate, his bed vacant; and she, once the idol and the treasure of his soul, was—oh! far worse than dead—estranged beyond the hope of reconciliation, and dwelling afar off with that bad brother, whose will to do had been equalled only by his power of doing evil.

For many a year, I say, they had been parted; and the sole offspring of their once happy union, young Gaston, had grown up from a sweet, curly-

headed urchin, to be as noble and as brave a youth as ever filled a mother's eyes with tears of happy gratitude. He was now sixteen years of age, handsome and tall, "and the exact resemblance to his father in his whole form,"—these are the words of one who had the tale from an eye witness of the facts, and who has left it upon record. Of this father, whom he knew well, and with whom he had feasted many times, that, "although he had seen very many knights, kings, princes and others, he had never seen any so handsome, either in the form of his limbs and shape, or in countenance, which was fair and ruddy, with gray and amorous eyes, that gave delight whenever he chose to express affection."

Such was young Gaston, heir to the principalities of Foix and Bearn, the idol of his father's subjects, brave, gallant, skilful in all exercises and accomplishments, full of high talents and bright and noble aspirations, when, on an evil day, he set forth from Orthès for Navarre, to visit the dear mother for whom he yet retained the liveliest affection, although years had elapsed since he had seen her bland and lovely features, or felt upon his brow the pure and hallowed influence of her kiss.

It was, indeed, an evil day; yet the sun shone as brightly on his young brow as he departed from his father's door, and he hailed the gay beams as rapturously as though it had been the happiest and the brightest of his life. Vain, vain, indeed, are the hopes of men, even when they appear most likely to be realized. His ride through the lovely scenery of the lower Pyrenees, cheered by the hopes of bringing home with him, on his return, that well-beloved, long absent mother, of seeing the vacant place filled by the gallery fire, and his great father's brow calmer and lighter, and less careworn than it had showed within his memory, was one scene of enchantment and delight. His visit, too, though tinged at times by some shade of bitterness and sorrow,—and which, of mortal things, is not so coloured?—was full of blithe and pleasurable moments—moments which, seeming to be light nothings as they pass, yet speak whole volumes to the feelings and affections, and leave behind them traces indelible through years of sorrow; moments which opened to that youth, secluded as he had been, from his childhood upward, from the society and love of woman, a mine of treasures which had lain, even to that day, concealed and unsuspected within his heart of hearts. It was a bitter pang to him, indeed, and it saddened

his affectionate and gentle nature for many a weary hour, when, as the time came round for his return, he found that, for all his entreaties and remonstrances, he could by no means prevail upon her to return home with him. She had, it seemed, imbibed so strong an impression that her husband would receive her harshly and treat her cruelly in consequence of the base conduct of her brother, that she dared not to trust herself with him, seeing that he had not sent her any orders by their son to come back to him. The parting, therefore, between the mother and her boy was almost as sad and heartrending as their meeting had been rapturously happy. Bitter and burning tears were shed, and long embraces interchanged, and promises and pledges given and received; and when they had, at last, said adieu and torn themselves apart, there was a stinging sense at Gaston's heart which he had never felt before—a sense of something nearly akin to resentment against his noble father; a sense which troubled him as many times as it recurred, and which he would have banished by an effort; and yet it scarce was banished ere it returned again, till it had taken a strong hold in his bosom, and was not any more to be dislodged.

They parted, promising each other that before many months they would meet again; and she betook herself to her lonely state, to her dull embroideries, and duller ladies, and he to his sprightly Andalusian's back to pay his last ceremonious visit to his uncle of Navarre, before he should turn his face toward the blue summits of the Pyrenees, and the fair realms beyond them.

It was a calm and beautiful morning, as I have said, and the hour was yet early, when the train of young Gaston was drawn up before the gates of Pampeluna, awaiting only the appearance of their young lord to commence their homeward journey. Yet, early as it was, there were oaths loud and deep among the men-at-arms, and knitted brows and whisperings among the knights and nobles of the train, and chafings and curvetings, and shrill, angry neighings among the spirited and restless horses, for they had waited long already, and, early as it was, the sun had already raised his crown of light above the eastern mountains, and the day's march, which lay before them, was neither short nor easy.

The presents of the Bad King to his nephew and his train had been displayed and accepted duly; and many chargers of the best Spanish strain, with housings regally magnificent, and many mules, laden with suits of the choicest armour, and many Spanish grayhounds, "so handsome and so good there were none like them," and many falcons of renown, attested at least the liberality of the King of Navarre. And all was ready—all had been ready for an hour, yet Gaston de Foix tarried.

To all inquiries of his pages and esquires, and many were made of chamberlain and steward, and seneschal, the answer was returned that the young count was closeted alone with the king in his private chamber; and so, indeed, it was, for after the

morning meal was ended, and the last farewell said, Charles of Navarre had called the boy aside, and led him up a private staircase into his own most secret cabinet, and there, while all the cavalcade without were hurrying and fretting at the long delay, those two sat anxiously, though quietly engaged in deep and earnest converse.

It was a small, square room, completely hung on all sides with crimson cloth tasseled and laced with gold, covering even the doors, and interrupted only by one large oriel window, and a huge wooden mantel-piece, elaborately carved with saints and martyrs; on each side of this cumbrous ornament was a tall cabinet of dark walnut wood, inlaid with brass and secured by several clasps and locks of massy workmanship; and these, with a round table covered with embossed gilt leather, and a pair of huge armed chairs, were all the furniture which the cabinet displayed. On the table lay a few sheets of paper, or parchment rather, with a standish of silver richly gilt, and a manuscript copy of Froissart, illuminated splendidly, between the leaves of which had been inserted, as a mark, a broad double-edged stiletto.

In the chair facing the window, with his fine, open features exposed to the full morning light, sat Gaston de Foix, his beardless chin propped on his right hand, the elbow of which rested on the table, gazing a little upward, his whole countenance irradiate with hope, and beaming with pleasure and excitement, yet listening with all his soul to the words of his wily uncle.

The King of Navarre was not, at this time, by any means what we should term an old man, yet in his whole bearing and appearance there were many marks of age, and even of decrepitude; for his shoulders were bowed, and his knees weak, and his hands trembled continually, even when they were supported idly on the table. He had been, in his youth, though somewhat undersized, formed with wonderful grace, and his figure still retained some traces of its former symmetry. His countenance was as beautiful as it had ever been, unwrinkled and serene, and showing little or no trace of the years which had passed over him; but it was not the beauty of a man at all, much less of a king and warrior—it was a soft, voluptuous, effeminate face, with large, dark, languid, sleepy eyes, the principal expression of which was love of ease and luxury—the last face in the world, in short, which you could have imagined to belong to the most turbulent and wily, the fiercest and most merciless person of an age eminently fierce and restless—a person to whom murders the most foul and horrible were every day familiar incidents, things schemed and perpetrated, and never thought of afterward, except for the profit or the pleasure they had purchased him.

He, too, sat by the table, and his head likewise was propped on his right hand, but here all resemblance between the attitudes of the uncle and the nephew ended—for while the young man, conscious of innocence and careless of scrutiny, fronted

the light, and suffered the other to read every thought and feeling as it rose unbidden to his ingenuous features, and merely rested his chin, half carelessly, half thoughtlessly, on his forefinger, the other, partly, it may be, on purpose, but principally from an habitual instinct, had not merely turned his back to the window and bent down his head, but had placed his hand across his brow edge-wise, so as to shade his whole countenance, his dark eyes gleaming out from beneath his palm now and then, as if to note the impression his words made, with a keen, piercing expression, strangely at variance with their wonted languor.

"Well," he said, "Gaston, my fair nephew, it grieves me much that, after all your labour, your pains should be but thrown away; for it is very plain to me that you have come hither, perceiving how unjustly your father hates his countess, and hoping, by your visit, to reconcile them once again. It was well meant, poor youth, it was well meant; and seeing that she is my sister, I am displeased as much as you are—for it is all in vain—"

"No! no!" replied the young man, eagerly, "no, no! I trust not, uncle. My mother would have gone home with me now, had I brought with me any order for her safe conduct. Oh that I had but thought of it! And I hope,—yea, but, by Heaven's grace, I do believe,—that I shall obtain that readily, and for the simple asking from the most noble count."

"Young, young—you are young, Gaston," answered the king, in a voice of well-affected melancholy. "I do remember me when I was young myself, how I was used to believe all that I hoped, and to hope all that I desired;—but all that has passed away, boy; quite passed away from me, as it will pass from you—"

"Now, Heaven forefend!" the young man interrupted him. "Far rather would I die than outlive the power of hoping."

"So all men think at some time," answered Charles; "and yet they all do outlive it ere they die, unless they die very young, or continue fools all their lifetime."

"But have you ceased to hope, uncle?"

"Long ago, long ago," replied the bad king. "I have ceased long ago to hope for any thing which depends for its accomplishment on aught beyond my own power and my own will—and the things which do so depend, I do not hope, but determine! So am I never balked, while you hoppers—"

"But, uncle, uncle," Gaston interrupted him, with great excitement and eagerness of manner, "this does, in some sort, depend on my own power, and my own will."

"It might," said Navarre, removing his hand from his forehead, and gazing wistfully into his nephew's eyes, "it might, but it does not. It might, and I could show you how—but no," he continued, as if recollecting himself, "no, I will not—and yet it could be done, right easily; but no, no, no, I will not."

"What could be done? How, how?" exclaimed the enthusiastic boy, springing to his feet, and grasping the cold schemer by the hand. "Oh! as you hope for Heaven!—oh! as you love my mother!—oh! by your belt of knighthood! by your crown of king! speak, uncle, tell me, tell me, how might it be in my own power? In my own will, it is! Oh tell me, tell me!"

"It were of no avail," answered the king, with a calm smile, half melancholy, half sarcastic; "you would not take the means, even if you knew them. They are for men, Gaston, for men who dare every thing and dread nothing."

"I am a man, sir uncle," replied the boy, proudly, "and, as the son of a brave man and noble, and no bastard, dare to say that I too am brave and noble!"

"Doubtless," said Charles the Bad; "I meant not otherwise; and yet—you would not use the means."

"I would, I say, I would—use any means, if they were innocent and lawful," Gaston exclaimed, almost angrily.

"If—if!" the king returned, with his fell sneer. "Your *if* is a marvellous safeguard for weak consciences, a very potent ally and assistant to the undecided—and, *lawful*, too! What in the fiend's name do you mean by lawful?"

"Lawful for a good knight, a Christian, and a gentleman, to do without dishonour," answered Gaston.

"Then every thing is lawful," said the king, quietly; "for there is nothing in the world that men desire which they do not believe to be expedient, nothing expedient which they do not hold necessary, and nothing necessary which they do not perform and call honourable. So every thing is lawful!—and if not, Gaston, I do not see how it could fail to be lawful, aye, and praiseworthy, too, in a good son to do any thing, even if it were somewhat perilous, to reconcile his parents after so long estrangement."

"Perilous! Is it perilous?" asked the boy, yet more eagerly than he had done before. "To whom perilous? To me?"

"Perhaps so," said the king. "But come, we will talk no more of this; your train is waiting—the sun is high already in the heavens—you must be moving. Farewell, gentle nephew."

"Uncle," said Gaston, "hear me. I swear to you, by all that I hold most sacred, by the honour of my mother, by the glory of my forefathers, by the knighthood which I trust one day to win, that till you have told me the means by which I may bring my parents once again together, I will not leave this chamber, nor break bread, nor lay me down to sleep—and so may all good saints assist me!"

"Here is a precious springall," cried Charles, as if he was amused at the impetuosity of his young relative. "The next thing I shall know, he will be levying war upon me. Well, well, I suppose it must be so; and yet I had far rather not. But will

you take the means, Gaston, when you shall have learned them?"

"I will, I swear to you, I will, and that very gladly. What is it, uncle—the art magic?"

"Natural magic only, Gaston," answered the king. "I doubt not you have heard tell of philtres."

"Oftentimes, but believed in them never."

"Ah, there be many things, I fancy, which you believe not, my poor Gaston, which, natheless, be most true; and this is one of them."

"But are you sure—are you quite sure, uncle?"

"Mark me, boy—this that I am about to say is scarcely fitted for your years; but then, you say, you are a man, and, besides, great ends justify the means. I am, I care not to deny it, something addicted to the sex. When I was younger and fairer to look upon than I now am, I trusted to fair form and honeyed words to win the charmers; but, as I waxed in years and waned in beauty, nephew, I looked, as every wise man should, how I might best make up my losses—and, thanks to a right learned Moor, a hakim of Grenada, I have a love powder. I tell thee I have tried it scores of times, and, by my honour as a knight and king, it never yet has failed me. Once tasted, the coyest are the kindest."

"Give it me—give it quick!" cried the boy.

"The minutes will seem hours to me, until I can use it. Give it me, quick, good uncle."

"Good uncle!" replied the king, with a sneer.

"You forget—you forget, boy, that they call me bad—Charles the Bad! By Saint Genevieve, a pleasant sobriquet!"

"They lie—they lie in their throats!" exclaimed Gaston, "and I will maintain it on them with my sword! But come, uncle, give me the powder, and bid God speed me, for I am all on fire to try it."

"Well, here it is," said Charles, rising from his seat, and taking from one of the cabinets a small velvet bag, richly embroidered with gold, and tied with strings of gold cord. "Take but a pinch of the powder this contains, and strew it on his meat or sprinkle it upon his cup, breathing your mother's name the while, and no sooner shall he have tasted it, than he will seek her with as much heat of passion as he now shuns her with reluctance; and they two will thereafter so love each other, that they shall never more be sundered. But see you speak of this to no one, for, spoken, the charm loses straight its power; and try it not on any others, for it is so wrought that one parcel will work but on one person. Now, wilt thou do it, Gaston?"

"As I hope to live, will I," answered the boy.

"Excellent uncle, best friend, thanks—endless thanks, and farewell!"

"Farewell, my noble boy. Heaven speed you, and send all as I would have it."

And the youth darted down the stairs, bounded to the back of his good horse, and went his way hopeful and rejoicing.

There could not, probably, be found throughout the whole world a more romantic ride, through scenery as various as it is magnificent and charming, than that by which Gaston de Foix sped home-

ward. At first, the rich and diversified lands of Navarre; the vineyards now gorgeous with their purple clusters, and gay with the concourse of the merry vintagers; the grand though dark sublimity of the cork woods, mantling the uplands with a robe of everduring umbrage; the olive groves dotting the southern slopes; and, as he advanced farther on his route, the wild, bare heaths, all redolent of thyme and cistus, haunted by the shy plover, and peopled by unnumbered flocks, under the guardianship of skin-clad mountaineers and shaggy watch dogs; and, in the back ground, the vast purple ridges of the Pyrenees, cutting distinct and cold against the glowing sky, with here and there a solitary peak, towering high above the rest, and glittering with eternal snows. What could be more sublime, and at the same time sweeter and more lovely? The soul of the young man, moreover, who traversed that fair tract, was, for the age in which he lived, unusually liable to the effects and the impressions arising from the lovely sounds and sights of nature. I said, for the age in which he lived; and yet, perhaps, we are wont too much to undervalue the men of those—as we are vain enough to term them—dark ages; for it is certain that in those days there was a mighty source of active energetic poetry, of living, sentient romance, welling out of the hearts of men. Their vices were, indeed, rude and sometimes horrible, but, at least, they were bold and manly; and then, with their vices, they possessed, in no small or mean degree, the compensating virtues, which, abounding in the half-barbarous state, too often vanish utterly before the bar of boasted civilization. Truth, hospitality, faith, charity, flourished in those grim days, as we believe them, because it is their grimness only that has left its trace upon the page of history, as they have never flourished since for all our clearer lights and purer dispensation. Nor can we doubt, I think, if we look to their choice of sites for their unrivaled edifices, convent or castle, abbey or hermitage, or palace, sites evidently dictated by an indisputable taste for the charms of natural scenery, that, if they had not their schools of statuary or of painting, if they could not discourse so learnedly as we of juice and chiaro-scuro, and all the jargon of the studio, they had eyes in their heads to observe, and hearts in their bosoms to appreciate and love all that is beautiful and bright in the works of Him who made nothing but he saw that it was good. And why should it not be so? Is it the dweller in the wood and wild, the follower of the deer on difficult mountain tops, the shepherd of the boundless plain, the sailor of the trackless deep, familiar as these are with every aspect of earth, sea and sky, who undervalue and look coldly on the works of God?—or is it the pent inmate of dull and sordid cities, whose soul, cribbed, cabined and confined, till it has lost both the power and the wish to soar, is chained down to the counter and the till, until it can perceive no pleasure save in the sight of bales and barrels, no music save in the clink of money bags?

Be this, however, as it may, the soul of young Gaston, as he rode along, full of all sweet and generous sensations, full of affection for the mother from whom he had just parted, for the father whom he was hurrying to embrace, expanded to the utmost, felt its own conscious immortality, and burning with high hopes and noble aspirations, which took their colouring, in part, from the bright sunshine which streamed over him, from the soft air which fanned his brow, from the fair scenery which spread around, because almost too happy, too secure, to be proof against strange disappointment.

Alas! alas! for men. Is it not ever when our hopes are the highest, when the fruition of our best wishes is at hand, when all the storms and trials of our life seem to be hushed and quiet, when all the future smiles upon us with bright promise, that some great stunning blow is dealt, changing the tenour of our ways, extinguishing the last spark of our best earthly hopes, and teaching us, beyond all word or precept, "to lay not up for ourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do break through and steal."

But Gaston de Foix thought not of these things as he spurred his high-mettled Andalusian onward. He thought but of the welcome that awaited him at home. He pictured to himself but the joy of his noble father, when he should clasp him to his breast; and beyond that, still in far perspective, of the gratitude and love, and rapturous affection, when, by his means, those beloved ones, who had so long been sundered, should once more be reunited and for ever.

Gay jest and merry conversation, legends of chivalry and love, tales of arms and armours, great deeds and grand devotions, seasoned the hours of travel; and at the pleasant halt at the noontide hour, beside some clear fresh fountain beneath some giant tree, the tinkling of the gittern and the sweet vielay or keen siromite were oft heard resounding from the midst of that armed band, touched, too, by no unskilful fingers, and trolled by no untutored voices. The age of the troubadours and trouveres had not yet passed away, and in the court of the great Count of Foix, himself a passionate admirer of the gay science, and a munificent patron of its professors, there were not a few knights and nobles who could compete with the most famous minstrels of the day.

At night, some feudal castle, perched on its vantage crag, like the eagle's eyry, or some gray convent, bedded in venerable woods, amid broad pastures and calm waters, received the voyagers with free, unquestioning hospitality. On the third morning of their route, they cleared the passes of the lower Pyrenees, having tarried the night previous at Orbaiceta, on the Spanish side, and about noon reached St. Jean Pied de Port, on the river Niol, where they were sumptuously feasted by the Castellan, who held that frontier town—one of the most important, by the way, in the dominions of the Count de Foix. Night found them in the midst of familiar scenes and well recollected places, streams

wherein, oftentimes, Gaston had snared the speckled trout; rocky hills, where his unerring bolt had stopped the bound of the mountain izzard; forests which had rung many a time to the deep baying of his bloodhounds. The moon had risen, and was sailing broad and serene among the scattered fleeces of white cloud which hung like islands in the deep vault of air, when, filing down a steep, precipitous descent, they reached the shallow fords of the Gave de Suzon, and beyond its bright ripples might mark the little town of Mauleon, sleeping in the soft moonbeams, and the huge dungeon-tower of its castles looming up, black and massive, against the starry sky, with one red ray of torch or fire light streaming out from the guard-room lattice, in vivid contrast with the pure, spiritual lamps of heaven.

Of this stronghold the captain rode beside Gaston's rein, the far-famed Bastot de Mauleon, one of the most renowned and fearless champions of the day. He had borne arms for the first time in the great battle of Poitiers, under the mighty John de Greilly, better known as the Captal de Buch, and in the celebrated charge of that great leader with the English horse, had made a knight and two esquires prisoners to his own hand. The next year he had fought in Prussia, against the Teutonic pagans, under the captal still and the Count de Foix, and had shared in the gallant exploit by which the Duchesses of Normandy and Orleans were liberated from the Jacquerie in the market-place of Meaux en Brie. Then, having served as long as an English banner was lifted, or English trumpet blown against the King of France, when the high game of war was ended, he had retired to his own native land, and served beneath the banners of the Lord of Foix, who had advanced him willingly to high preferment, although of Gascon origin.

He it was who now held the Castle of Mauleon, and who now galloped forward to cause the drawbridge to be lowered and the gates raised, to admit the son and heir of his liege lord.

There the gay feast and the light revel followed, and these were in their turn succeeded by the soft slumbers of youth and happiness and innocence. The following morning was yet young, when Gaston, anxious now to rejoin his father at the earliest moment, aroused the sleeping squires, and never ceased from hurrying them until they were once more astrid and in the saddle.

Joy, joy—there was joy in Orthès, as the young heir of Foix came caracoling through the streets, superb in youthful beauty, all life and energy, and happiness and hope. The very consciousness of his own secret aims lending a deeper meaning, a more enthusiastic light to his fine features, he seemed more a man in soul, in bearing, and in gravity of purpose, more fixed of character, more steadfast, and more able, as if by long years of experience, than when he rode forth from the echoing barbican, a little month before, a gay and careless boy. Nor was this change unnoted by the stout veterans who had followed him, or by the glad and

loyal crowd, who shouted themselves hoarse as he drew nigh—for never was there prince more justly popular among the vassals of his feudal sovereignty than the great Count of Foix; and never was there a prince's heir, throughout all France, from the blue waters of the inland sea to the vexed billows of the northern channel, from the impetuous Rhone to the snow-mantled Pyrenees, on whom a people's hopes were set with a more deep reality than the young Gaston.

Trumpet and horn pealed forth their merry notes of welcome, and the clash of presented arms met him with ready welcome; and the glad burghers ran together with loud shouts, and deeper if less noisy prayers; and bright eyes gazed out of high casements, and wreaths were showered down from fair hands as he passed, and many a woman's voice was heard among the lower din of mob congratulation, invoking Heaven's best gifts of wisdom and long life and happiness and virtue for the brave heir of Foix.

Alas! alas! that mortal prayers should be so blindly and so rashly uttered—that they so rarely meet accomplishment on earth, so little do men know what is their real gain, so often do they ask for that which, if gained, were but a worse ruin.

Alas! alas! Long life and happiness for him, whose days were already numbered—the thread of whose fate was drawn to the last hank already, and “the blind fury with the accursed shears,” waiting even now “to clip the thin span of life.” Alas! alas! wisdom and virtue for one doomed to fall by his own folly and the guilt of others!

But now there was no thought of mourning or of sad anticipation—all was fond promise and exulting joy. The very populace, who ran along shouting and cheering by the side of Gaston's charger, caught something of the enthusiastic hope that flashed from the boy's eyes, and when they recollected whither he had lately been, and by whose arms he had been encircled, they too were filled with bright memories of the young, fair and gracious lady, the sweet Blanche of Navarre, whom, in years long gone by, and never, never to return, their liege lord had led through the streets of Orthès, his beautiful bride, and well beloved of all men. They recollected how, for a time, her gentleness and artless beauty had soothed the sternness of the count, and lulled his fiery passions, and how—though he was at all times a just and honourable master—his face had been more frequently arrayed in smiles, and his outbursts of violent and furious passion more steadfastly restrained, while she was shedding the soft influence of female fascination over the scenes of feudal rudeness mixed with feudal magnificence.

They had loved that bright, gentle lady; all ranks and classes loved her—all, from the tiring woman, who was wont to deck her long black tresses, and robe her magnificent and shapely person, down to the varlet who rubbed down her palfrey, all would have laid down their lives for her; and when she went thence, on a visit to her bad brother of Na-

varre, and, after a short space, it was whispered that she would no more return home to her half-orphaned boy, a sadness and a gloom fell over the Hotel de Foix, which never was effaced—no, not by all the lavish and superb magnificence of him whom good old Froissart has described as the most magnificent, courteous and generous, of all the kings, dukes, princes, counts and noble ladies, at whose courts he had been entertained with feats of arms and legends of amours, and all that was most chivalric and honourable.

For there is something in the very atmosphere that floats around a young and lovely woman, which seems to soften and to humanize every thing which is brought into its sphere of contact. Look at the room once frequented by some fair, gentle being, after she has departed, and though the furniture may be the same, the same beautiful scene stretching before its casements, the same glad sunlight pouring its lustre over all, still it is not the same—a glory has departed from the spot, a pleasant perfume has been swept away—all is changed, though the same; and oh, most desolate and gloomy is the impression which that change makes upon the minds even of transient witnesses.

Thus was it, that although the pageantry and splendour of the court had gone on as lavishly as ever, although the minstrel's lute and the *trouvère's* lay rang, as merrily as of yore, through hall and bower; though the hounds ran as hastily through the green woods, though the falcons flew as high and as boldly, though deeds of arms were performed as gallantly to win the kind glances of lady's eyes, and though the eyes of ladies rewarded them as fondly, still there was something wanting—something which not a knight so given up to feats of a battle, not a page so rash and reckless, not a dame or donzel so occupied with her own charms and love passages, but perceived and lamented it.

And now, as her boy came careering through the streets, returning, as all knew, from a visit to that dear mother, with something of her pure, artless spirit flashing out from his broad brows and enthusiastic eyes, there was more than rejoicing, more than congratulation in the hearts of the people—there was a hope, an expectation that this his coming would be but the harbinger of her return, to meet whom all hearts would have bounded gladly, save his alone who should have the most rapturously welcomed her.

This was the spirit which, as young Gaston swept along with his merry train, found vent in the mingled cries, wherein were blended the names of Gaston, heir of Foix, and Lady Blanche—beautiful Blanche of Navarre!

And if the boy's eye flashed with exulting pride, as he waved his plumed cap in answer to his own shouted welcome, the eye was suffused with pleasurable tears, and the lip trembled with unsuppressed emotion, when it was his loved mother's name that met his ears on every side, chiming in joyously and gaily with his most treasured hopes.

And now they passed the far-famed hostelry of

the Moon, kept by the good esquire Ernauton du Pin, who had served oftentimes with Gaston's father, and won high renown, and been for years accounted one of the trustiest men-at-arms that ever laid a lance in rest, until, when he was already old, the kick of an unruly charger had fractured his leg so severely, and the ill treatment of an unwise leech had so aggravated the evil, that he was unable to mount on horseback any more—so that thereafter he became the landlord of that famous inn, whither all knights and noblemen resorted, who came to pay their respects to the Count of Foix, and passed his latter days right cheerily among the clang of flagons and the light clash of knives and trencher, as he had spent his youth among the fanfares of trumpets and the wild din of battle-axes rending steel harness.

Old Ernauton came forth himself in his black velvet pourpoint, with the gold chain about his neck, which he had won many a year before, the ransom of a stout man-at-arms, the Meneant de Sainte Basile, and a white napkin thrown across his arms, halting on his lame leg, which gave him pain at every step and motion, with his long snow-white hair fluttering in the breezy atmosphere, but a bright twinkle in his clear blue eye, and a frank smile on his fine manly face.

"Welcome, right welcome home!" he said, in a voice that well became the jovial landlord, in whom the gallant man-at-arms was now completely merged. "Welcome home, Gaston! Right glad will be the noble count to greet you. But tarry, young sir, tarry for our dear lady's sake, and taste old Ernauton's Bourdeaux. You would not do old Ernauton, I trow, the wrong to pass by his door thirsting—"

"I must on, Ernauton," replied the youth, gaily. "I will drink with you another time, I promise you—perhaps to-morrow. But now I must on to my right noble lord and father. Well might he be aggrieved were I to loiter on the way, and that so nigh his gates."

"You need not tarry, Gaston," replied the old esquire. "There is no tarrying long, I trow, at the Moon, for wine orwassail either; but, by the bones of St. James of Compostella, you must taste of my Bourdeaux this bright autumnal morning! Ho, Clement, tapster, Clement!"

The mantling flagon was produced forthwith, and goblets handed round to the cavaliers, and, without dimounting from their steeds, they quaffed the generous wine; and, with a bounteous largesse to the tapsters and grooms of the hostelry, and a light laugh, and pleasant speech to the jolly host, they rode onward through the narrow streets until they reached the embattled gates and spacious courtyard which surrounded the Hotel de Foix.

There was a sentinel, it is true, on duty at the gates, clad in half-armour, with a heavy broadsword by his side, and a yet weightier battle-axe leaning against the freestone bench on which he was sitting—for peace and a sense of security, generated in part by the great influence of their lord and the re-

spectful terror in which he was held by the neighbouring feudatories, had begotten something of lax discipline. He started to his feet, however, as the train swept up to the gates, and, raising his bugle to his lips, blew a long blast, the peculiar cadences of which announced as plainly as words the return of the young lord to his father's halls. As the shrill echoes rang through the long vaulted passages, and eddied round the sculptured pinnacles of the huge Gothic mansion, and filled the wide courts with their joyous din, a sudden bustle was heard everywhere, and a rush of many feet, and the vast yards and the flights of steps were crowded in a moment with all the motley concourse that constituted a noble household in that splendid period of the world's history. There were knights and esquires, some in half-armour, others in the rich costume of the times, but all with waving plumes and embroidered scarfs, and swords at their sides and spurs on their heels; there were gay pages, with long silky love-locks and flaunting dresses; there were friars and monks in cowl and cord, jesters with bells, and coxcombs, minstrels and *tregetours*, and jugglers, valets and grooms, and falconers with hawk on fist, and foresters with greyhounds in the leash, and archers on the battlements, and yeomen at the gates, and demure looking damsels peeping out with bright eyes and rosy cheeks from the diamond paned lattices—all hurrying, with eager joy, to look upon the people's favourite, the young and glorious Gaston.

Anon there came a shout, just as the leading horseman entered the gate and stooped his head beneath the low-browed arch. "Room, room for the Castellan—room for the Count of Foix!" And with the words, followed by a magnificent army of gentlemen and nobles, among whom there were no less than four bishops, and many knights from Arragon and England, and many sovereign princes, the count himself stood forth to the head of the great outer staircase to meet his gallant son.

Truly he was a noble personage to look at, tall, stalwart, powerfully limbed, round chested and thin flanked, and withal exquisitely graceful, and fuller, as it seemed, of lithe and sinewy agility than of mere brutal strength. His broad expansive brow was perfectly unwrinkled and serene, and his straight, coal black eyebrows lent an air of decision not, perhaps, all unmingled with a touch of sternness, to his fine manly features.

His eyes were large, well opened, and expressive, of a dark liquid gray, which, although sleepy in their ordinary aspect, and calculated chiefly to express the softer sentiments, could at times lighten with intolerable lustre, and, as it were, blight those who dared withstand them with their appalling flash of fury.

His nose was well formed and slightly aquiline; but his mouth, which was, perhaps, the worst feature in his face, though partially overhung by a dark, thick moustache, was indicative of immense resolution, but of sensuality, likewise, and something akin to cruelty.

At this moment, however, it was arrayed in his blandest smiles, as he gazed pleasantly down upon his favourite son—favourite the more that he was the only offspring of his marriage—since the two noble looking youths who stood on his right hand and left, known as Sir Evan de l'Eschelle and Sir Gracien, were illegitimate, and unable, therefore, to succeed to the honours or estates of his proud feudal sovereignty.

"Ho, Gaston!" he exclaimed; "welcome—welcome, boy, back to Bearn. I swear to Heaven I am right glad to greet you!"

At the words, Gaston leaped down from his horse, and, springing up the steps, fell down upon his knees before his father, and catching his hand raised it to his lips, saying—

"Most noble sir, and father, most reverently do I greet you and most joyfully, and thank you humbly for your courtesy to your poor son and servant."

And the count raised him from the ground, and clasped him to his breast, and his full eye melted for a moment, and a tear seemed to swim in it as he made answer.

"My fair and gentle son, well pleased am I to have you near me; for we have missed you at our board, and in our exercises of the field. Your absence seemed, though brief, to me exceeding long and tedious. How left you our kinsman, the King of Navarre?"

"Well at ease, noble father," answered Gaston, "and very kind and courteous. He sent fair greetings to you, sir, and dealt with me right royally and graciously."

"Ha! and what presents did he make you, Gaston?"

"Most noble and most princely gifts, fair sir," cried the boy, his eyes sparkling with delight. "See, father, that proud Andalusian from which I but now dismounted. Is he not a fit steed to bear a king to battle? Look; saw you ever better points, or a rarer blending of high blood with vigorous bone and spirit?—spirit! by Heaven, he is all spirit! I fancied, as I backed him, if you but spurred him hard he would make wings to himself and soar into the blue sky, as minstrels say the Barbary horse, that was backed of yore by Sir Bellerophon, was wont to do when he went forth to battle with the sea monster the magician Neptune had sent to devour the fair daughter of the Soldan! And two mule loads of the most glorious armour—as light as a silk pourpoint, father, and as strong as a castle wall, and as bright as a polished diamond. I saw three tall Castilians hew at it with double-handed swords and axes, propped on a wooden block, and they did not so much as touch the burnish of the plates. And jewels, sir; and four Spanish greyhounds, the finest I have ever seen. Now, by St. Hubert, I long to show you how they run. They are so fleet, that the wightest stag cannot outspeed them on the plain; so staunch and savage, that no wolf or boar alive can stand against a brace of them."

"We will see, Gaston, we will see to-morrow,"

said the count, laughing at the young man's ecstacy. "I fancy I have got some English dogs that will mate them here, to say the least of it, which good Sir William Willoughby has brought me from his great lord the Duke of Lancaster, now lying at Bourdeaux. But tell me, was this all he gave to you?"

"All, noble sir and father," replied Gaston—but as he spoke, the ingenuous blood rushed in torrents to his brow, as though indignant at the falsehood which he told; although he, in the vanity and deceitfulness of his own heart, imagined that such a falsehood was venial, at least, if not praiseworthy, seeing that the end to be gained was good and meritorious. The end—the end! As if it was for such blind worms as we to think of ends; we, who cannot foresee when we rise up in the morning what shall betide us ere the sunset—who say to-day we will be blithe and happy, and lo! before an hour hath flown, our happiness is in the very dust, our merriment turned into utmost desolation! As if it was for us to judge of ends, or dare assume to ourselves the attribute of the Eternal—for us, to whom it is enough to strive with all our hearts to do his biddings blindly, knowing that, as his biddings, they must needs be the best and wisest.

The count observed the rapid flush, and smiled; for he misunderstood its cause, and yet fancied that he understood it thoroughly.

"Ho, ho!" he said; "needst not to blush, fair son, for I did not think to impeach thy uncle's courtesy or liberality at all. For, by my faith, I think he has dealt with you honourably, and as became a noble and puissant king. And so let us to meat—for the board was nigh spread, I trow, when the gate-ward blew the *Bienvenu*, and aroused us from our stools; and here is my good lord, the Bishop of Pamiers, desirous to say grace even now. But how is this? Here be your brethren, Gaston, Sir Evan and Sir Gracien—I trow you have not saluted them."

"No lack of courtesy to them, fair father," Gaston made answer. "But while thou wert speaking to me, to whom all my homage and my reverence is due, it would but little have become me to have eyes or ears for any other. Now, with your leave, I turn to embrace my gentle brethren."

And, suiting the action to the word, he clasped both of his natural brothers to his bosom, and kissed them upon either cheek, and spoke to them graciously and frankly, but more especially to Evan, who was his favourite and his chosen comrade, being within a few months of his own age, and so like to him, both in shape and stature, that they were dressed in clothes of the same cut and pattern, and used one chamber, and were but rarely seen apart, whether in their exercises or their sports.

The rest of that day passed without any thing of note to fix it on the mind—not slowly, for all was pleasant and full of lightsome promise, but equally and calmly. The feast in the knight's hall was followed by the promenade in the gallery, enlivened by much smooth and flowing conversation. Then

minstrelsy and dancing, and the midnight supper; and then, wearied in body, but serene of mind, hopeful and happy, Gaston retired to his chamber, and soon sunk into deep and dreamless slumbers. The sun was high in heaven before he awoke on the following morning, and when he did so, it was with a sudden start—for Evan, who slept, as I have said, in the same chamber with him, had arisen betimes, and was already well nigh appareled, when their clothes, of the same size and colour, having got mixed together on the bed, he took up Gaston's coat, mistaking it for his own. He was in the act of drawing on the sleeve, when he discovered the bag of embroidered velvet, and, in half boyish, half malicious curiosity, was in the act of untying the gold strings, exclaiming, as he did so—

"Ho, Gaston, hast thou turned monk, or Moresco, since thy departure from our Bearn? Be these the relics of some holy saint or martyr? Or is it, perchance, a talisman to guard you from the evil eye, or to win the hearts of fair ladies?"

Aroused from heavy sleep, with that sentiment of surprise and almost terror which oftentimes accompanies the return to consciousness, Gaston sat up in bed for a moment, gazing about him half bewildered, as if he scarce knew where he was, till his eyes fell on Evan just in the act of opening the precious philter.

One bound carried him clear across the chamber. He seized Evan rudely by the arm, and snatching the coat from him, said, very quickly—"It is my coat, Evan; give me back my coat—for what have you to do with it?"

"Tush, I care not," he replied; "I do not want your coat. I only wished to see what was the powder in it. It is not the philosopher's stone, is it, Gaston? If it be, it is well for me you awoke so quickly, for, in another moment, I should have tasted it, and then I might have been turned into gold, like Sir Midas, when he bathed in the Guadalquivir."

"Nonsense," said Gaston, laughing, and not sorry to get an opportunity of turning the subject, "nonsense, Evan; you know a great deal better than to talk such stuff as that. It was not in the Guadalquivir that he bathed in, at all; it was in the Pactolus, a river in Scotland, which is a part of the island of England;—and it was not the river that changed Sir Midas into gold, but Sir Midas that changed the sands of the river into gold dust. But come, let us go and swim in the Gave de Pan, before breakfast. I will tell you, some time or other, all about this same bag, but now I may not. To do so, would destroy all its virtue."

"Then it has virtue, has it?" cried the other. "I thought so—I thought so. I do so earnestly desire to hear of it. When will you tell me, Gaston?"

"Nay, I know not," replied the other, laughing. "Perchance to-morrow; perchance the next day—but certainly before the world is a week older."

"Ha! then will I be patient. Yet will it trouble me, I trow, when I think of it—but yet I will be patient."

No more words passed at the time. The young men dressed themselves and went forth beyond the gates of the town, and enjoyed their swim in the bright crystal waters that lave the walls of Orthès, and returned friendly and as brothers should, and joined the knights and nobles in the great hall at the morning meal; but the count was not present, for he was not wont to leave his chamber until late in the day—nor did he ever eat or drink much in the day time; but at midnight he quitted his chamber, where he was used to sit reading or writing after evening, and twelve of his servants bore large waxen torches before him in their hands, and placed in as many candlesticks of massive silver, which stood around his table, filling the great hall with a clear and brilliant light; and then he ate heartily and drank wine, and took pleasure hearing his minstrels play and sing; for he was himself no mean proficient in that science—but in the day time, unless when he rode forth to hunt in the forests, or to hawk on the green meadows by the river bank, he was rarely seen by his friends or his courtiers.

The tilt-yard and the tennis-court, the manly exercises and exciting games of the period, consumed the remainder of that and the following days; but it was remarked by all that young Gaston was unusually depressed in manner, and many said that he must have some heavy feeling at his heart—yet none suspected him of any evil, so much nobility had he shown even from his childhood upward, and so much purity of soul, and no touch of any evil.

On the third morning after his return, Gaston de Foix and Evan de l'Eschelles were in the tennis-court, and that fine game had been carried on for some time between the brothers with skill and activity, as nearly equal as is possible—Evan having, however, if any thing, a little the best of the match, and continuing to gain slightly on his opponent, who was becoming a little chafed, and, consequently, began to play at disadvantage.

It was at this period of the game when, both scoring forty, it had been called deuce no less than three times in succession, neither party having as yet made two strokes following, that Evan began to joke and taunt his brother.

"Gaston," he said, "methinks you were better don your coat. It may be very well that yon puissant talisman may help you win the game, which, otherwise, you are very sure to lose!"

"Tush!" answered Gaston, sharply, and evidently much displeased; "what foolery is this?"

And as he spoke the word, springing forward to return his adversary's ball, which had fallen nearer to the *dedans* than to the figure 1, at the first rebound, his foot slipped on the pavement, and he fell at his full length.

"Advantage!" cried the master of the game, and almost simultaneously Evan burst into a loud and taunting laugh.

The game recommenced instantly, from the novice side of the court, as it is called, and, in less

than five minutes, Gaston, who was now so thoroughly angry that he could not control himself at all, made two faults in succession, giving thereby the stroke to his adversary, and the advantage game likewise.

"Ho!" he exclaimed, stamping his foot furiously on the pavement, "ho! by the thunder of heaven, you cannot foil me so again!"

"Aye, but I can," said Evan, "twenty times running. Put on your coat, put on your coat, and try what the talisman will do for you."

"Pshaw!" answered Gaston, hastily; "it is no talisman, although it may be a charm; and you, and your mother, too, shall know it one of these days, I promise you."

"Ha! then it is a charm to bring the countess home again from Pampeluna. But she shall never come, I tell you, Gaston; never, I tell you never! For Gabrielle de l'Eschelles shares not the bed alone, but the heart of the great Count of Foix!"

"Braggart, and bastard!" exclaimed Gaston, furiously; "dare you compare your harlot mother with Blanche, the paragon, the peerless of Navarre?" and, with the word, he smote him violently with his open hand on the side of the face.

Evan de l'Eschelles sprang back as the blow reached him, snatched his sheathed dagger from the ground, where he had cast it down with the rest of his clothes when he undressed himself for the game, and, laying his hand on the hilt, glanced savagely for several moments into the eyes of Gaston, with his brow knotted into a dark frown, and his face burning with terrible excitement. For several minutes, it may be said, he doubted whether to bare the blade and avenge the insult in the life's blood of the insulter—but his cold blooded nature, and his deep knowledge of his father's fiery and vindictive humour prevailed, and he cast the weapon from him, shaking his fist almost in his brother's face, and saying, with a bitter grin—

"Tu me la pagherai!"

Gaston laughed scornfully, turned on his heel, dressed himself hastily, and, leaving the tennis-court, mounted his horse; and, riding away into the great woods toward Lourdes, was not seen any more that day until nightfall.

But Evan de l'Eschelles hurried on his clothes, likewise, in no less haste than his brother had done, and ran away, with his cheeks still crimson with the excitement of hot anger, and the tears streaming from his eyes, to the apartment of the count, who had just returned thither from hearing mass.

"Ho! what means this?" asked the count, gazing in wonder on the flushed and tearful face of the boy. "Weeping? Go to!—go to! For shame, thou art too old to weep! Tears are for women and for boys. What ails thee, ha, what ails thee?"

"In God's name, my lord," answered Evan, "Gaston has beaten me; but it is he, not I, that deserves to be beaten."

"Wherefore?" asked the Count de Foix, sharply. "Gaston? Wherefore, I prithee, does Gaston deserve to be beaten?"

"On my faith," answered Evan, "ever since he returned from Navarre, he wears in his breast a bag of powder. What it may be, I know not, nor can I in any wise conjecture; but he told me, this day, his mother should return hither soon, and be more in your good graces than ever she had been before; and that my mother, Gabrielle, should be driven forth for a harlot out of Orthès."

"Ho!" cried the count, angrily; "hold thy tongue, and be sure thou mention not to any man alive what thou has told me now!"

"My noble lord," replied Evan, "be sure that I will obey you."

"Begone then," said the count, "and see that you do obey me."

Then he remained alone in deep and gloomy meditation, until the night had closed in dark and heavy; nor did he then call for lights, as was his custom, but continued to walk to and fro in his chamber, gnashing his teeth and playing with his dagger's hilt, and at times groaning, as if his spirit was about to be divorced from his body.

At length midnight drew nigh, and he came forth from his chamber with his fine features all composed and calm; and, finding his torch bearers waiting in the corridor, with their huge waxen torches ready, he descended the stairs without saying a word, and walked in his accustomed pomp, arrayed as a sovereign prince, with his torches gleaming before him and his minstrels playing loud behind, into the great knight's hall, where, under a canopy of cloth of gold, and on a chair covered with scarlet, was spread the high table for himself and the few chosen guests admitted to his own board—the bishops, namely, of Pamiers and Lescar, Aire and Rou, the Viscount de Roquebertin, a Gascon, the Viscount de Bruniquel, the Viscount de Gousserant, and Sir William Willoughby, the envoy from the English duke, who lay at Bourdeaux, with his powers.

These noblemen and primates were awaiting the arrival of the count, conversing gaily on the topics of the day, in a small ante-chamber, opening from the great gallery into the dining-hall; while all the gallery without was crowded with esquires and knights, the count's guests from Bigorre and Gascony, including many of the first renown in warfare, and yet more of his own knights from his Suzerainty of Bearn—among whom were in waiting, Sir Espaign de Lyon, Sir Siguart de Bois Verdun, Sir Nouvaus de Nouvailles, and Sir Pierre de Vaux, the chief stewards of the hall.

Beside the count's board, stood his own bastard brothers, Sir Ernaut Guillaume, and Sir Pierre de Béarne, while Evan de l'Eschelle and Gracien attended, the one to place the dishes, the other to pour out the wine, and Gaston leaned, moody and ill at ease, on the back of his father's chair, waiting until he should be seated to carve and taste the feast.

Heaven's! what a clang was there of instruments—trumpet and gong, and kettle-drum and cymbal, pealing through the high arches of the vaulted hall,

and making the silken banners, which floated over-head, to shake and rustle in the breath of their strong harmony, as the great count and his guests and vassals entered. The minstrels and the heralds cried "Largesse! largesse! noble lords!" and to the cry, the count responded by a donation of five hundred francs in gold, such was his daily custom. But on this day he had clad the six minstrels of the Duke of Tauraine, who were there, in garbs of cloth of gold, bedecked with ermine, each valued at two hundred francs. But little recked he of expense, who was the wealthiest and most prudent ruler of the day, and, by the immense amount of his treasures, no less than by his prudence and sagacity, was able to set all the most powerful kings and princes of the age, his turbulent, ambitious neighbours, quietly at defiance.

The count and his chief guests were seated, and simultaneously the long tables, extending through the length of the great hall, were crowded—the seneschal marshaling every gentleman to his appointed place, and servitors and sewers spreading the boards with all the choicest dainties of the age.

There was a pause, while, at the count's right hand, the Bishop of Pamiers arose, and, in a clear, sonorous voice, distinctly heard in the hush of that noble concourse, asked for a blessing on the meat; and then the clash of knives, the clang of gold and silver flagons, and the gay music of the numerous minstrels, resounded far and wide the notes of social preparation.

It was not long, however, before there was a longer pause, a deeper hush of astonishment and terror; and every eye turned anxiously toward the group upon the dais beneath the cloth of maintenance.

For scarcely were the covers placed, and scarce had Gaston carved a slice from the breast of a huge peacock, which, with its back and claws finely pealed, and its proud tail displayed as if it were yet living, was the chief dish, placed opposite his father, before the Count of Foix was seen to catch at something which hung dangling from the bosom of his son's pourpoint. The boy started back aghast, trembling exceedingly and turning very pale, as if he were completely thunderstruck; but the count kept his hold firmly fixed, and cried—

"Come hither, Gaston; hither, I say—nearer, nearer!"

And drawing him close to the table, he tore the bosom of his pourpoint open, and cut away the velvet bag with his knife, exclaiming—

"What devilry is this? Speak, sirrah!"

But, as he spoke, and before his son had the time to answer him, he opened the bag, and seeing the powder, strewed some of it upon a piece of meat, and calling up a large wolf dog which had followed the company into the hall, gave it to him to eat.

The dog snapped at it greedily, and every eye in the vast concourse assembled there was riveted upon the beast, to see what should follow; but the count's eyes were fixed upon the visage of his son, nor ever were removed thence, until the animal, in

less than a minute's time, so deadly was the poison, rolled up his eyes, uttered a howl of agony, and, falling to the ground, struggled one moment in violent convulsions, and was dead!

Then the count sprang upon his feet, and, with the carving knife still grasped in his hand as when he cut away the fatal bag, he aimed a deadly blow at his own child; but the Viscount de Roquebertin caught him by the right arm, and stayed the stroke for an instant, while others of the knights who sat at meat with him, rushed in between him and the culprit, crying—

"Ah! for God's sake, my lord, be not so rash and over-hasty, but make inquiry first, ere you do evil to your son."

But the count cried aloud in Gascon—"Ho! Gaston, ho! thou traitor! For thee and thine inheritance, which would have come to thee, have I made war and incurred the hatred of the great kings of France and England, Spain and Navarre, and Arragon, and gallantly have borne myself against them, and yet thou wouldst murder me. Infamously bad must thy disposition be! Know, therefore, that this day thou shalt die the death—and by this blow!"

And with a sudden bound he threw himself across the table, still brandishing the knife; but Gaston had retreated down the hall, and all his knights and esquires interfered, some casting themselves on their knees before him, and exclaiming—

"Ah! ah! my lord—for the love of Heaven, do not slay Gaston. You have no other child. Slay him not, for he may be innocent of what the bag contained, and therefore be blameless!"

Then the count paused, and considered for a moment, biting his lip till the blood sprang, and frowning very terribly; but, after awhile, he said—

"Be it so. Away with him to the dungeon, and let him be so guarded that he shall be forthcoming."

And when the youth was removed, he sat him down again to supper, and ate and drank, and conversed, and listened to the lays of the minstrels, as his custom was, and made no allusion more to what had passed, nor did any one of those who were with him, for they well knew that in his mood he was right fierce and cruel, and none desired to anger him against himself, or against his unhappy son.

He sat, as usual, nearly two hours at the table; but, ere he went to rest, he gave order that all those who waited on his son should be arrested, to answer for such charges as might be brought against them on the morrow—and many were arrested, but not all; for, in the hurry and confusion of the time, the Bishop of Lescar escaped and fled the country, and with him several others, who were all grievously suspected; but it was well for them they did escape, for all the others who were taken were put to death, to the number of fifteen, after that they had undergone the question, forasmuch as they had not told the count what they must needs have known, that Gaston wore such a bag in his bosom continually, when they must have perceived, and that

certainly, that he could wear it for no good or loyal end.

Days passed and weeks, but the heart of the count was not satisfied, nor was his rage appeased against his son, whom he assuredly deemed guilty—for he assembled straightway at Orthès all the prelates and high nobles, both of Foix and Bearn, and others of the great personages of the country, and said unto them, when they were all assembled—

“Gaston has done this thing, and surely he shall die!”

But when they had heard him speak, they replied—

“Under your favour, my lord, no! We will not have it so, that Gaston shall be put to death. He is your heir, and you have none other.”

Then the count listened to their words, and determined that Gaston should be kept in durance for some month or two, and then sent out to travel, if he in gratitude, perchance, might repent him of his sins, and return to good conduct.

And those of Foix departed not till the count plighted them his honour, that Gaston should not die for this offence, so great was their affection to the misguided youth.

But what avails man's interference, or to what end is the plighted word of princes, when the Lord of earth and heaven, who alone knows and governs all, has judged a man to destroy him.

For ten days, the unhappy Gaston lay in a dark room of the dungeon, knowing not what should come of it, expecting only death to end his miseries, untended, wretched and alone. At last a moody, melancholy madness grew on the miserable boy, that he would not put off or change his raiment, nor taste bread nor wine, though both were brought to him daily.

It was on the tenth day that the warder, entering with food, said to him—“Gaston, here is meat.”

But he raised not his eyes, as he sat on a low stool, leaning against the tapestried wall, gazing upon the floor sadly, with his hands folded on his lap, but said, in a dolorous tone—“I care not, put it down.”

Then he whose charge it was to wait on him, cast his eyes round the chamber, and saw that all the food he had brought on the past days, lay there untouched; and, shutting the door hastily, he ran to the count, who was sitting moodily in his own private cabinet, with a page combing his long curled hair, while he pared his nails with a little

knife, listening the while to one of his secretaries, who was singing to the music of a lute.

“My lord,” cried the warder, as he entered, “for God's sake, look to your son; he is starving himself in his prison—for I believe he has not eaten any thing since he has been confined.”

Then the count started to his feet furiously, and swore a fearful oath, and, in an evil hour, rushed to the dungeon, without saying one word more; and he went not by the great staircase, but by a private way, wrought in the thickness of the wall, that entered into the chamber where his son Gaston lay, behind the tapestry.

He held the knife in his hand as he went, scarcely knowing that he held it, grasping it by the blade so closely that scarce a groat's breadth of the point appeared beyond the fingers of his right hand. Yet so impetuously did he rush in and dash aside the tapestry against which, as if the whole had been foreordained, the boy was leaning, that the point entered a vein in Gaston's throat, though he knew it not.

The youth started back as he felt the prick, and stood gazing in terror, dreading he knew not what, on the stern aspect of his father. But he, not knowing that which he had done, and, perchance, daring not to trust himself, only cried—“Ha! thou traitor, why dost thou not eat?” and turned on his heel instantly and left the dungeon.

But the poor boy, terrified by his father's sudden entrance, and weak withal with fasting, fell instantly upon the floor, and was dead almost ere his father crossed the threshold—so that the count had barely reached his chamber before the news was brought him that his son was dead.

It was long, long ere he could believe it; but when he was convinced that it was so, and that his own rash hand had done the deed, he cried—

“Bitterly, bitterly, oh Gaston, has this turned out for thee as for me. Never shall I be happy any more!”

And though he was great, and opulent, and powerful, and famous, and renowned throughout all the realms of Europe, he said truly—“He was not happy any more.”

Such was the fate—and who shall say it was not fate—of Gaston, heir of Foix. It was a father's hand, indeed, that slew him, but the guilt must remain, and the retribution fall upon Charles the Bad, King of Navarre.

IL S'AMUSE; OR, THE GENTLEMAN FLIRT.

BY MARY DAVENANT.

"False are our words, and fickle is our mind,
Nor in Love's ritual can we ever find
Vows made to last, or promises to bind.
The foolish heart thou gav'st again receive,
The only boon departing love can give."—PRIOR.

A MALE flirt is almost as unnatural a production as a female warrior, and yet both anomalies have from time to time appeared in this strange world of ours. Flirtation seems as much a female privilege as fighting that of the lords of creation, and when by any fatality either intrudes upon the province of the other, as sad a havoc is made of human happiness by their arts as there sometimes is of human life by our valiant arms. The followers of Thalestris have, however, disappeared among the scourges of the earth; and, except on great emergencies, when we can still show that the ancient spirit is not quite dead within us, the gentlemen have all the fighting to themselves. But though we have resigned our usurped empire, we are far from having recovered that of which we have been so unjustly deprived; and the male flirt still stalks a destroying angel in our midst. Among those whose stars have risen, culminated, and sunk into the contempt they merited, I recall with some interest the adventures of one, which happened to fall under my own immediate observation.

I had been residing abroad for some years, when, at Paris, I became acquainted with a handsome and accomplished young gentleman, whose appearance and manners could not fail to prepossess me in his favour, independently of the circumstance of his being a native of the same town with myself—that strong attraction. A foreign land. He was the son of a wealthy resident of Philadelphia, and was one of the many who had appeared on the glittering stage of fashionable society during my absence, affording a specimen that the race of beaux at least had not deteriorated in that line. I had, however, no opportunity of judging of more than his exterior, for our acquaintance was a transient one, and, to our mutual regret, soon interrupted; but after a short time, again renewed in my beloved home, where I found Mr. George Kingston occupying the prominent place in the beau monde to which his many advantages so fully entitled him. He called on me soon after my arrival. We discussed Paris, Italy, Germany together, and my favourable impressions were confirmed by the intelligence of his observations and the grace and finish of his manner.

The first time I saw him in company, he was most assiduously attentive to a very beautiful girl,

a belle from another city, then on a visit to an aged relative, who, being unable to accompany her into the scenes of gayety in which she was anxious her youthful guest should mingle, consigned her to the care of any chaperon she could procure. I did not know Miss Danvers, but her appearance interested me, and, whenever we met, the attentions of George Kingston seemed to be more and more exclusively devoted to this lovely object. To me, there is an indefinable charm in witnessing the happiness of that golden period, a first love, (for so this seemed from the youth and ardour of the parties,) and I delighted in quietly observing the pair, who often appeared so absorbed in each other, as not to be conscious of any presence but their own. One evening I was thus engaged when interrupted by a lounging exquisite, whom I knew to be intimate with Mr. Kingston, and who, after taking a seat beside me, abruptly inquired the subject of my meditations. Thinking it a good opportunity to be enlightened as to the progress of this wooing, I replied that my thoughts were with the couple on the sofa opposite us, and said that it seemed quite a serious affair.

"Not in the least serious, on my honour," replied Mr. Clifford; "only a little harmless flirtation."

"A harmless flirtation," I repeated. "I doubt whether there are many such, unless both parties happen to be equally destitute of that common appendage of humanity—a heart."

"My own opinion is," said Mr. Clifford, "that hearts have no concern whatever in such cases; nor heads either, for that matter—the only organs required being the eyes and the tongue; these, dexterously used, are all that is necessary."

"And will you pretend to tell me, that no heart speaks in the beautiful eyes that are now turned so bewitchingly on your friend's face, and now so modestly sink beneath his gaze, while their dark lashes seem as though they would fain shadow her blushing cheek? He can have none if he does not feel their power. Woman as I am, I could love that fair girl, just from the beauty of soul that beams in every feature. Do not, do not tell me that such an one is to be trifled with by merely heartless attentions."

"Look at the circumstances of the parties," he

replied, "and you will soon see how the affair must terminate. Miss Danvers, though handsome and accomplished, is but 'a penniless lass with a lang pedigree;' and George Kingston, the son of a rich man who wants all his money for his own expenditure, brought up in idle and extravagant habits, he is as penniless as herself. The lady must find some 'Laird of Cockpen,' who wants a wife to keep his 'braw house' for him, and George must either wed an heiress or remain a bachelor till the end of the chapter."

"And yet there have been instances of the blind god overturning more elevated plans of life than those you have sketched; and, to all appearance, he will do so in this case. Once inspired with a genuine affection, Mr. Kingston may shake off his idle habits and adopt those more likely to lead to independence. Judging from the lady's looks, she would hardly refuse to share it, however small."

"George Kingston and a small independence! The idea is a good one," said Mr. Clifford, laughing. "Why, he would not marry Venus herself unless she had a good round sum in each pocket. Indeed, he has no wish to marry at all."

"Venus in pockets—shade of Homer defend us! But if such are his views, why does he waste his time on this portionless girl, lovely as she is?"

"Because he admires her and wants her to admire him. She is a great belle, and if he can distance other competitors, so much the greater triumph."

"He cannot be so unprincipled," I exclaimed.

"Really, I see no harm in the case. We frequent society for amusement, and how can we amuse ourselves better than by making love to these fair young damsels *pour passer le temps*. George is an excellent fellow, one of the best hearts in the world; but if the lady will fall in love with him in downright earnest, why he cannot help it, you know."

So spoke the frivolous man of the world, who, seeing from my looks that a serious rejoinder was to be expected, quitted me to bestow his civilities elsewhere. I now regarded the beautiful girl before me, into whose willing ear Mr. Kingston was pouring eloquence by no means unacceptable, with a deep and painful interest, occasioned by the insight into her lover's character that had just been given me, though when I looked at his open, pleasant face, I found it hard to admit that he was indeed the vain trifler Mr. Clifford had described him.

Ellen Danvers seemed one of those fair creations to whom the cup of life had been presented in a happy hour. Joy and gladness sparkled in every feature of her speaking countenance; but it was a chastened and refined joyousness, without the least approach towards levity: and when you looked at the expression of her clear blue eye, you could see that, gay and laughing as was her exterior, a depth of untold tenderness dwelt within. This depth had evidently now been moved by the entrance of the master passion; and my spirit sank within me

when I thought that the rich treasures of her young and trusting heart might all be yielded up to one unworthy of the gift.

Later in the evening, I was introduced to the young stranger, and my prepossessions in her favour were so far increased by our short conversation, that on the following morning I sought the house of her relative in hopes of again seeing her.

The servant at the door hesitated about admitting me. "Mrs. Hammond was indisposed," he said, "and confined to her chamber." As he spoke, a strain of melody reached me from within, and I quickly rejoined, "But Miss Danvers is at home," and entered the door. I paused on approaching the drawing-room, for I recognized an Italian air of which I was particularly fond, and would not interrupt the singer. A long sojourn in the land of poetry and song had rendered my taste in music a critical one; yet I was both surprised and delighted with the execution of the unseen musician. The liquid *lingua Toscana* was uttered with a pure and correct accent, and the "notes of linked sweetness long drawn out," evidently came from one imbued with the true soul of harmony. The moment they ceased, I advanced into the room, expecting to find Ellen alone; but I was mistaken. She was striking the last cords of the symphony, and her countenance still glowed with the excitement of her song, while beside her, and gazing on her with true lover-like devotion, was George Kingston. A shade of displeasure crossed his handsome face at the interruption of his delightful tête-à-tête, but he recovered himself while Ellen blushing received me, and the compliments I bestowed upon her performance, to which I confessed myself a listener.

I found Ellen's conversation refined and interesting, untouched by the slightest shade of affectation either in sentiment or manner. In fact, she was almost too free from it; for the varied expression of her features, and the eloquent blood that mantled so richly in her glowing cheek, spoke the feeling of the moment rather too plainly for the cold requirements of conventional usage. My visit was extended beyond the fashionable length, much to the annoyance of Mr. Kingston, whose abstracted manner while I remained was in marked contrast to his usual easy good-breeding.

From this time, I saw Ellen frequently, though rarely unaccompanied by the gentleman who was her constant attendant; and his unremitting devotion, which exhibited all the characteristics of a sincere attachment, prevented my giving further heed to Mr. Clifford's heartless suggestions, or to those of some others, who joined with him in saying the affair was a mere flirtation.

Time passed on. Ellen's bright and bird-like existence, so formed of melody and love, was undimmed by a single cloud. Pleasure spread her varied allurements without, and within was a fountain of perennial joy, which reflected its own gladness on all surrounding it. Even the aged Mrs. Hammond felt the influence, and seemed to recall the feelings of her own youth amid the gay circle

which Ellen attracted to her usually solitary home. The old lady's eye would brighten, when dwelling on her graceful form, while she did the honours of the house to her young guests; and, as it would glance from her to the distinguished looking youth by her side, it was plain she thought that nature had formed them for each other.

"Do you not think Mr. Kingston wonderfully like his grandfather, Colonel ——?" she said to me one evening.

"My dear Mrs. Hammond, he died long before I was born, and I have never seen his picture, so that I cannot judge of the likeness."

"Ah, I had forgotten it was your grandmother who was so intimate with him." (Like many old ladies, Mrs. Hammond frequently identified several generations.) "He was a splendid man—one of Washington's aids for many years; and I remember it was often thought your grandmother and he would make a match. It ended in nothing, however. Some said he jilted her, others that all the time she flirted with him she was privately engaged to your grandfather, whom she married very soon after. What was the truth I never knew; but he was certainly a most fascinating person, and made sad havoc among female hearts."

So then, thought I, both Mr. Kingston and myself have an hereditary claim to being flirts; but as I knew nothing of my grandmother's love secrets, I could not enlighten the old lady as to the culpable party in this case. It was, however, evident that Mr. Kingston's likeness to the handsome hero of the revolution had established him in her good graces, and she had no misgivings that the likeness had extended in one respect to the character as well as to the person.

But the period fixed for the termination of Ellen's visit now approached, and a shadow flitted over the brightness of her face when she told me that her mother's cousin, Mr. Montague, would be in town next day, and after remaining a week was to escort her home. I expressed my regret that we were to lose her so soon, and at the same time my pleasure at the prospect of seeing Mr. Montague, with whom I had been intimate abroad.

"You will find him as reserved and silent as ever," said Ellen, "but quite as good and quite as ugly."

"Nay, Ellen," I replied, "he is only silent when among strangers; and as to his want of beauty, I never thought of it after I became well acquainted with him."

"Nor do I," said Ellen, "except when I contrast him with those who are really handsome."

"With Mr. Kingston, for instance," I added, laughing. "Yes, there is certainly a difference. Mr. Montague is perhaps ten years his senior. He is a man of learning—Mr. Kingston a man of fashion. Both shine in their respective orbits, which will probably never interfere with each other. I can therefore admire both."

Ellen looked down, and then changed the subject by speaking—rather sadly, I thought—of her

anxiety to see her mother and sister, (her father had long been dead,) to whom she was tenderly attached, and from whom she had now been absent four months. The promised escort arrived on the following day, and I found him, as Ellen said, but little changed. There was the same quiet exterior, but the same inward enthusiasm, which only displayed itself to his friends and to those who could sympathize with it. In a ball-room, he was a cypher—with a chosen few, the centre of the circle. He had joined our party when in Rome, and the charm his genius and cultivation had thrown around every spot we had visited together, had so identified him with my classical associations, that when I saw his stately figure across a group of most pertinacious waltzers at a large ball, it seemed to me entirely out of place. Ellen was waltzing as usual with Mr. Kingston, and Mr. Montague's eye was following her through all the evolutions of the mazy dance. When it ended, and her partner stood supporting her and bending his proud Antinous head so gently towards her, an expression of unwonted sadness settled on her cousin's face. He soon after joined me, and began to converse in his usually interesting manner; but I could see that ever and anon his attention was distracted by a glance at her sweet beaming countenance, as she moved among the dancers. At length I spoke of Mr. Kingston and his devotion to Ellen, of his many attractions, and the happiness I hoped there was in store for her.

He evidently listened with breathless interest, but only replied, "You think him, then, worthy of her. Heaven grant it may be so," and abruptly left me.

In a few days, Ellen returned home. There was sadness on her brow when she bade me adieu; but it was a sadness mingled with hope that spoke of a happy reunion. To my surprise, Mr. Kingston did not follow her; for with most of her friends, I had supposed them engaged, and that such would be the announcement as soon as Ellen had rejoined her family. But there are mysteries in all love affairs, and this did not occasion me any serious uneasiness, until I saw the gentleman bestowing his attentions on another lady, who had appeared among us soon after Ellen's departure. This seemed strange, and Mr. Clifford's prognostic again occurred to me.

The approach of summer now dispersed the fashionable world, and after a short tour through our own beautiful state, I found myself located in a sequestered farm-house, in one of our most richly cultivated rural districts. Wander where we may, there is still a charm in home that outlasts all others; and this sweet valley, where as a school girl I had occasionally passed my vacations, was endeared to me by a thousand delightful remembrances. Among them was one of a remarkably beautiful child, who, though several years younger than myself, had at such times been my favourite companion; and when I looked upon the familiar face of the surrounding scenery, her image rose

my mind, from whence the exciting life I had led since we were separated, had almost entirely banished it.

On one occasion, however, she had been most vividly recalled. It was in the gallery of the Barbarini Palace, when standing before Guido's celebrated picture of Beatrice Cenci, that, after wondering at its beauty, the sad yet tender expression of the rich hazel eye, struck suddenly one of the hidden chords of memory connected with my childhood. It seemed as if those eyes had somewhere beamed upon me, and that the exquisite moulding of the whole face was not unfamiliar. I had seen copies of the painting, but they had never thus affected me; and while I dwelt upon it, the face of Lucy Meadows came before me as the one whose peculiar and touching expression that of the unhappy Beatrice so strikingly recalled. Though a miller's daughter in a distant land, Lucy certainly resembled the high-born and unfortunate Italian; and after musing awhile upon the singularity of the likeness, she was again forgotten.

Many were the happy hours that we had spent together, either rambling through the woods or on the bank of the pretty lake whose waters turned her father's mill, when it was my favourite amusement to deck the little beauty with flowers and feign she was an enchanted princess, while I would recount the wonders of fairy land and unfold to her the legends with which my memory was stored. An old quarry on the other side of the lake, which stretched before the house where I then was, had been our chosen haunt, and as I again looked upon it, I fancied I could almost see her starry eyes turned upon me, full of the gushing tenderness called forth by some moving narrative. "Tell me of Lucy Meadows," I said, turning to my hostess. "Has she grown up as beautiful as she promised, and as full of sensibility?"

"She is, indeed, as beautiful a creature as one could see on a summer's day," replied Mrs. Long, a plain farmer's wife; "or rather she was so—for she has sadly faded of late."

"How—is she ill then?" I asked.

"Sick at heart and in body too."

"An unhappy marriage, I suppose. She was, indeed, formed of too delicate materials for earthly happiness. Poor, poor Lucy."

"She is not married," said Mrs. Long, "but it is not less a bad man's fault that she is dying; and so fair spoken and handsome as he was. Who would have thought it?"

"Oh, Mrs. Long," said I, greatly agitated, "do not tell me she is unworthy. I cannot, will not believe it."

"Unworthy!—she!—there's not a better, purer creature upon earth. But I will tell you all about it."

Not to recapitulate the long-winded narrative of my worthy hostess, Lucy's story was briefly this. She had fully realized the promise of her early beauty and grown to womanhood, the pride of her parents' hearts and the admiration of the surround-

ing swains. Her own natural refinement and the imaginative tendency of her mind, fostered as it had been by her early association with my unworthy self, had, however, sadly unfitted her to be the companion of the unlettered youth of that simple neighbourhood. Her acquirements were merely such as the country school where all were educated could bestow; but in our childish intercourse many a well-worn volume had found its way from my possession into hers, and their perusal had opened to her the portals of an inner world, in which it seemed she dearly loved to dwell. She was active in the performance of all the duties of her station, but when they were done, instead of gossiping with the neighbouring lads and lasses, she would isolate herself in some sweet nook and read for hours, while they would wonder at her choice. This taste was too encouraged by her parents, who, proud of her "learning," as they called it, added to her slender library such books as she desired. So passed her early youth in quiet happiness, and she had numbered eighteen summers untouched by any sorrow.

At this time—it was two years before I heard the tale—a shooting party of several gentlemen were loitering in the neighbourhood, when one of them, in an evil hour for her, saw and admired the rare beauty of the miller's daughter. The easy hospitality of the region gave him a ready welcome to her father's house, and while his pleasant, winning manners, made his society acceptable to all its inmates, he soon learned the readiest access to the ear and heart of the gentle Lucy. After a short sojourn, his companions departed, while he remained, feigning his excuse in a wish to explore the beauties of the surrounding scenery. He had told his name and lineage—the latter was dear to every lover of his country, and the worthy miller, who, in the depths of his own heart, thought his Lucy would dignify a crown, saw no danger in her intimate association with one of his wealth and name. My reader will perhaps anticipate this, as I did, when listening to the story, I faltered out—"George Kingston!"

Yes, it was he who had lingered weeks and months on this spot, and by the arts he so well could use, had won the heart of the innocent and unsuspecting Lucy. That he was above her, save in all that woman loves to reverence, she had never dreamed; for the true spirit of equality and of our republican institutions, banished as it often is by frivolous distinctions from our large cities, ever finds its home among our country population; and the farmer who owns his broad acres, the tenant who tills them, the miller who grinds their produce, and the humble dependent who shares it, all feel that they are brothers and know of no superiors.

Mr. Meadows saw that George Kingston loved his child—he saw, too, that Lucy's calm and gentle spirit was stirred within her, like the lake by the summer's zephyr; but little did he or did any know the change his presence had wrought in her whole existence. Lucy had hitherto enjoyed little conge-

equal companionship; she had felt—and oh! how sad the feeling—that she was alone even among those whom she dearly loved. Her world was not their world; her most treasured thoughts found no echo in their bosoms, and even on outward nature she looked with other eyes. Now a being of a higher order had appeared, one who not only could sympathize in all her tastes, but elevate and refine them by his own. The influence of his personal beauty too, was not unfelt, nor of the generous sentiments that seemed to animate him. It was then no wonder that Lucy loved with all the enthusiasm of her nature, nor that when after these months of happiness had passed, and a father's express command had recalled George to his home, with only the hope of his speedy return to cheer her, that the charm of life seemed to have been broken.

For weeks—nay, months—she patiently awaited his promised coming; but autumn faded into winter, and with it faded the roses on Lucy's cheek, but still he came not. At length news reached her that he had left the country, and crushed her already blighted hopes. From that time she had gradually been drooping, like some fair flower culled for a moment's pleasure, and then left to wither and decay. The inward wound took the form of consumption, and it was now thought she had not many weeks to live. What had been the motive of the heartless man in this wanton destruction of another's peace, none could say. Whether he had meditated a deeper wrong, or whether it was in conformity with Mr. Clifford's theory of life, for mere amusement, still rests within his own bosom.

When I had listened to this recital, I soon retraced the well remembered path to Lucy's home, and after a short interview with her mother, who prepared her to receive me, I was admitted to her chamber. It was many years since we had parted, yet I should still have recognized her, not so much by her resemblance to the blooming girl I had left, but to the picture which had struck me so forcibly; for as she reclined a little elevated on her pillows, with a kerchief bound across her brow, her pale and suffering face, her round, full eye, and the expression of her still beautiful mouth, rendered the likeness fairly startling.

She seemed rejoiced to see me, spoke of the many hours we had spent together as some of the happiest of her childhood, and pointed out several little memorials of them that were still around her; and never shall I forget the heavenly expression with which she drew from beneath her pillow my parting gifts—a bible and a book of prayer—which she said were now her only treasures. Yes, dear Lucy, deeply had you imbibed the heavenly dews of God's Holy Word, and, untaught by man, with true childlike simplicity and faith, laid hold of the only strong refuge in the day of trouble. No earthly guide had led her towards the straight and narrow entrance, for her family were of the sect of Friends, and the country round was peopled with those of the same creed, who, trusting to the light

within, fortoffer any outward illumination; and Lucy had thus been left, in her dark hour, to seek it for herself.

In our frequent interviews,—for from this time I was her constant visitor,—I was astonished at the depth and clearness of her views. Her vivid imagination seemed to become each day more spiritualized, and to realize so fully the promised glories of the unseen world, that while listening to her I have often trembled at the slight veil that separated me from the great company of the redeemed which my companion was so soon to join. She spoke of her short dream of earthly love so bright and brief, and said that she still clung to its remembrance as a foretaste of the holier affection that now filled the heart left desolate by its unworthy possessor. Towards him she felt no resentment, and once had wished to see him; her father had conveyed her wishes to him a few months before, but they had been unnoticed, and this last proof of his total indifference added another pang to the many he had already inflicted. One more earnest desire was too ungratified, and that she had till now refrained from expressing, in the fear of wounding her parents' prejudices—it was that she might be united to the church by baptism, and this wish was at length fulfilled. It was on the morning of her death, and the triumph that lighted her splendid eyes as the holy waters bathed her brow, had hardly faded from them, when they were closed in the still slumber that knows no waking—adding another victim to man's heartlessness and woman's broken trust.

* * * * *

Months passed away—I was again at home, and to my frequent inquiries about Ellen Danvers, I learned to my great satisfaction she was well—Mrs. Hammond assuring me that it had been all a mistake about young Kingston; and Mr. Clifford, after laughing at the interest I had taken in the affair, added, "Montague is now devoted to the lady; he is rich, and not particularly young or handsome. You will see that all will end exactly as I told you." The children of this world are proverbially wise in their generation, and, relieved to think that Ellen's gay and versatile nature had saved her from suffering, I trusted to this statement; which he said he had received from an unquestioned source.

A wedding in my family took me to ——— in the course of the winter, and before Ellen could hear of my arrival, I inquired my way to her mother's house, and was ushered into the parlour. The rooms were small and simply furnished, though as I looked around I could see evidences of former wealth, and of the taste that wealth can never purchase. Books in several languages were on the shelves, all well read and well selected; the piano was open, and beside it a pile of music; a few good pictures were on the walls, and on a marble table was a small but exquisite statue of Ariadne sleeping, which I remembered to have seen in the studio of a young sculptor in Rome.

This I knew had been purchased by Mr. Montague to encourage the starving genius who had produced it, and its presence there confirmed the report that had reached me of his engagement to Ellen. She soon appeared, and in the excitement of the meeting, I at first observed no change in her; but after her mother and sister had joined us, and, relieved from the necessity of entertaining her guest, the glow had faded from her features, I was struck with the unnatural expression that succeeded it. Her cheek was full and rounded as before, but her mouth, about which smiles and dimples were once perpetually playing, was now set into rigidity, while her eye, so darkly beautifully blue, seemed to have lost all its original brightness—quenched, I feared, by tears. Her very attitude spoke of desolation, and as she sat beside the sleeping Ariadne, and I thought of all the misery man's inconstancy had entailed upon my sex from the time of Theseus to the present day, I yielded my full assent to the poet's assertion, that

"Men were deceivers ever."

The affectionate manners of Mrs. Danvers made me feel at once at home, and when, with a kindness that would take no denial, she insisted upon my being her guest for the evening, (it was the only one at my disposal for some time,) promising me her cousin Mr. Montague's escort home, I readily consented to remain. I had hoped his entrance would dissipate Ellen's sadness, but it was not so; she still sat quiet and indifferent, and, except when obliged to do so, seldom spoke. He did not direct his attention particularly to her, though she was evidently his object; and, as his rich and well-stored mind added a charm peculiarly his own to the conversation, Ellen listened, and for the moment seemed her former self. In the course of the evening I asked her to sing, and as all joined in the request, she was obliged to comply. But, oh! how different the song from those of former days; where was the brilliant execution, the rich outpouring of the melody within? Gone, utterly. She sung a simple Scottish ballad, which more resembled a wail than a song, and I fairly wept as the sad strain floated upon the air—it told the tale of a broken heart, and I felt that it was true.

But my walk home with Mr. Montague encouraged me. Seeing the deep interest I felt in one so dear to him, he made no secret of his attachment, and, to my surprise, I found he was not without hopes of its ultimate success.

"Had her former lover," he said, "been worthy of her, or had her regard for him been founded on other than his personal attractions, I should indeed despair. Mr. Kingston is handsome and accomplished, and appeared to love her. She returned him an affection founded on the qualities he so eminently possesses, and not on those that constitute the real greatness of an immortal being. She now knows him to be unworthy, more so than perhaps you would believe, and that under his smooth and pleasing exterior, there is a cold, selfish and de-

graded heart. She does not pine for him; on the contrary, I know that if now he asked her hand, she would spurn him from her. She weeps over her broken faith and trust in human love—her peace so wounded and her heart so scathed; and if ever she loves again, it will be one as different from Mr. Kingston as the love she will then bestow is from the passion that so often usurps its name. Her mother and sister are truly judicious; and while they sympathize with her sufferings, they strive to lead her to higher aims in life than she has ever yet adopted."

I told Mr. Montague poor Lucy's story, which had by some means reached him, and did not conceal my apprehensions that Ellen's depressed and miserable state might poison the sources of her life also.

"Heaven forbid!" was his reply. "From your account I should judge their natures to be different. Your gentle Lucy must have been of a highly imaginative temperament, one calculated to cherish sorrow as a congenial guest. Ellen is not so; she is formed for happiness, and her effort is to chase away the dark destroyer's presence. Life has many charms for her, and though her feelings are keen, she possesses both energy of mind and pride of spirit. It is seldom she allows a stranger to witness her depression, and I ascribe her want of self control this evening entirely to the associations your presence could not fail to recall. You will see her in society apparently gay. I need not tell you it is all assumed; but this very effort shows a strength that will at length be conqueror."

I hoped that he was right; and when I next saw Ellen, it was in a crowded saloon, where she was receiving the admiration her exquisite beauty could not fail to excite: but the forced smile that gave no brightness to her eye, the occasional compression of her brow and of the corners of her mouth, showed how painful was the mask she wore; and I could sometimes see her catch her breath with a sort of spasmodic effort, even while her low and silvery laugh was echoing on my ear.

Who loathes hypocrisy more than a confiding generous woman, yet who can struggle more desperately to deceive than that very woman when her confidence is blasted and her heart's best gift thrown back to her unvalued? Oh! how hateful did George Kingston appear as I looked upon her! His very beauty seemed deformity, and his other gifts the snares that lure to misery; and how my heart warmed towards his noble rival, so greatly his inferior in outward attractions, yet so truly good and worthy of the heart he coveted.

Mr. Montague was probably thirty-five. He had been highly educated, and was for many years an industrious plodding man of business. The unexpected bequest of a large fortune from a distant and eccentric relative, had suddenly raised him to affluence, and the first use of the liberty thus acquired, was to hasten to Europe, where he could indulge the tastes and pursue the studies he had been obliged to forego while earning his daily bread. In

person was tall and dignified, though not in the least handsome; his complexion was dark, and his usual expression so grave, that when his face relaxed into a smile, the effect was that of sunshine upon a darkened landscape. After spending five years abroad, devoted most sedulously to self improvement, he had on his return renewed his intimate association with his cousin Mrs. Danvers, and grave, sedate and studious as he was, had been captivated by the girlish grace and winning accomplishments of the lively Ellen. He knew, however, that the regard she felt for him was more that of a child for a father or a pupil towards a sage, than the tender affection he would have inspired; and he had so guarded his feelings that neither she nor her family had been aware of their nature until after her unfortunate visit to Mrs. Hammond. Then he saw she loved another, and the conviction was unutterably painful. But when after weeks and months that other seemed to have forgotten her, and Ellen's cheek and eye showed the suffering his inconstancy inflicted, then Mr. Montague's tender attentions could no longer be misunderstood by her mother and sister, though she still seemed unconscious of the feeling that actuated them.

It was an unspeakable satisfaction to Mrs. Danvers, indignant as she was at the heartless treatment of her child, to know that one she so highly valued would gladly take the wounded dove to his bosom, and cherish her with more than a parent's tenderness. Her own health was precarious, and she knew not how soon her two daughters might be left wholly unprotected; but still she would neither by word or look encourage Mr. Montague's addresses. She told him plainly that she saw Ellen's heart was seared, her feelings numbed by the chilling influence of disappointment; that her faith in man was gone, and she feared would never be revived. Mr. Montague thought differently; he said that he would not ask for Ellen's hand until he had won her heart, and that time and opportunity were all he desired. This much Mrs. Danvers herself communicated to me. She had heard through Mr. Montague of Lucy's melancholy story, and from her I learned that the same want of principle shown by Mr. Kingston in his love affairs had been more than once displayed in other matters. Lucy's fate, and Ellen's also, was therefore blessed compared with what it might have been had either become his wife. But many sad forebodings filled my heart on her account, and threw a shade of melancholy over the whole of my visit to ———.

* * * * *

Three years afterward, I was again there. My home was with dearly cherished friends, and I was surrounded by all that wealth and fashion had to boast. It was towards evening. A gentleman and lady were with me in the splendid drawing-room, and before me was the sleeping Ariadne, whose beauty and grace I could now admire without

thinking of her sorrows, for the very air around me was filled with gladness. Yes, time and assiduity had worked their usual wonders, and the once desolate Ellen Danvers was now the happy bride of Edward Montague. I had stood beside her when she pronounced the vow that united them, and never had Ellen's beauty struck me more. It had been subdued and chastened by the trial she had undergone, and with the elevation of her character through the hard teachings of experience, a higher charm had been added to her whole appearance. We were all gaily discussing a fête which had just been given on their marriage, when a letter was placed in Mr. Montague's hand, and its perusal seemed strangely to affect him. Ellen was alarmed, and insisted upon knowing the cause, when her husband, after regarding her with some anxiety, drew her towards him as he said,

"My Ellen, this letter brings sad tidings of one who once was dear to you. Your sorrows, and poor Lucy Meadows' early death, have both been terribly avenged, and the unhappy George Kingston now lies a mutilated being on the borders of the grave. It is a dark story of domestic peace violated and holy ties dissolved. You know the gay and foolish Mrs. S.; her husband, in a transport of jealousy, challenged Mr. Kingston; they met, and George was dangerously wounded. A limb has been amputated in the hope of saving his life, but the result is still doubtful. May he be spared to repent of his many misdeeds."

Deep sobs were Ellen's only reply, while I recalled many circumstances that proved Mr. S——'s jealousy but too well grounded; and Mr. Montague told us further particulars of the tale of darkness. When we had finished, Ellen raised her head from her husband's shoulder, and said—

"Oh, Edward! how can I be grateful enough to Heaven for saving me from that unprincipled and worthless man; how show my sense of all the blessings now bestowed on one so selfish in her sorrow and so long unworthy of your deep devoted love?"

Mr. Montague gazed fondly into the blue eyes that were so tenderly fixed upon his own, and, as he kissed her tearful cheek, replied—

"By adoring, as we both must do, my Ellen, the Providence that has overruled even our hardest trials for our good, and made them result in our purest joys. Had you never loved this worthless man, we might have been still divided. It was your sad experience of the counterfeit that taught you the value of the true affection, and gave me the place I so long laboured to gain in your heart. I grieve over Mr. Kingston's depravity and its punishment; but was more to be expected from a career commenced in falsehood than a termination in disgrace? If he recovers, he may learn to live for something better than mere amusement, or at least to choose such as interfere less with the happiness of others."

THE HEIRESS.

BY F. E. F., AUTHOR OF "A MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE," ETC.

"For the sensitive plant has no bright flower;
Radiance and odour are not its dower:
It loves, even like love—its deep heart is full."—SHELLEY.

CHAPTER I.

"Who is that dark little girl you have been talking to, Ainslie?" asked Tom Hawthorn.

"That little girl," as you call her, is the bride, Mrs. Levingsworth, for whom this party is given. Have you not seen her before?"

"You don't mean to tell me that that is Fred Levingsworth's wife?" replied the other, in an accent of almost incredulity, his eyes still fixed upon the lady who had called forth the inquiry.

"Yes—certainly. Why should you doubt it? There is nothing very surprising in the fact, is there?"

"That Fred Levingsworth's wife?" repeated the other, once more. "He who has always been so fastidious that he never could admire any woman whose beauty was not indisputable! And this is his wife, is it? Well, there is no accounting for marriages!"

"Heaven bless your simplicity," replied Ainslie, laughing. "There never was marriage more easily accounted for than this, and no impeachment on Fred's taste, either—for, mark you, I never said he admired, but only married Miss Lane. She was an heiress. Do you understand the mystery, now?"

"Ah, an heiress!" rejoined Hawthorn, in a tone which said "I comprehend." "And is she very rich?"

"Immensely so, I am told; and you may be sure Fred would not go 'cheap.' He would not sell his tastes for nothing."

"I saw you talking to her," continued Mr. Hawthorn; "does she seem intelligent?"

"The dullest little soul you ever saw," replied Mr. Ainslie. "I could not get any thing out of her but 'yes' and 'no,'—or rather 'no,' for it was 'no' to every thing I asked her. She seems to have been nowhere, seen nothing, and know nobody."

"Where did Levingsworth pick her up? I never heard the name before," said Hawthorn.

"Somewhere across the Bowery—I don't know exactly where."

"Well," rejoined the other, "he will spend his money like a gentleman. I give him joy."

"That he will," replied Ainslie. "Fortune is all he wanted. Fred is a clever fellow," and the speakers turned off different ways, and mingled with the crowd gathered together in honour of the young wife of Frederick Levingsworth.

"Julia, have you been introduced to the bride?" asked Mrs. Lawrence.

"Yes, I have done my duty," replied the young lady. "I was introduced, and made all manner of pretty speeches about Levingsworth and the family intimacy, and all that. And, by the way, he ought to be ashamed of himself. What an ugly, stupid little thing she is!"

"My dear," said her mother, "remember Levingsworth was poor."

"And if he was, he need not have made such a sacrifice—a spirited, noble, handsome fellow as he is. It is a shame."

"What is a shame, Miss Lawrence?" asked Mr. Ainslie, who came up just as the young lady pronounced the last words with more emphasis than caution.

"That we are not all heiresses," she replied, smiling.

"Fortune places her gifts on the right hand and on the left," replied the young man. "If beauty be the boon of some," he added, fixing his admiring eyes on Julia, "is it not fair that wealth should fall to the lot of others? You would not exchange with Mrs. Levingsworth," he continued, in tones of the most persuasive flattery, that contrasted oddly enough with the careless, worldly, off-hand tone in which he had discussed the subject with his friend Hawthorn.

"Well, Emily, what do you think of our new sister?" inquired Mrs. Fenwick of Miss Levingsworth, the morning after the party just alluded to. "Will she improve upon acquaintance, think you?"

Miss Levingsworth shook her head sadly as she replied. "I fear not, Mary. Beauty I did not expect, for that one has scarcely a right to hope with such a fortune; and, besides, Fred told me she was not handsome, from which I concluded she was plain. But air, manner, education—something I certainly did expect, and wofully am I disappointed; for, between you and me, she seems to me as dull as she is plain, and I fear there is nothing in her to make any thing out of her. I see no ground to hope for improvement. Poor Fred! She will be a dead weight upon his hands forever." And the sister sighed as she thus pronounced sentence on her brother's young bride. "And how well he behaves," she continued. "I looked at him last night in admiration. Animated and joyous as usual, he received the congratulations of his

friends with all the cordiality of a man who might truly feel himself the subject of such felicitations, and introduced his wife as if he really was not ashamed of her."

"Yes," said Mrs. Fenwick, "I never saw any thing better carried off. Poor fellow, I felt for him, for there is no denying that it is a melancholy sacrifice. But what could he do? Situated as he was, ready money was indispensable to extricate him from the embarrassments into which he had got himself involved. With his generous nature and liberal habits, he must have wealth. He does not know how to economize, nor do I think, with his warm and impetuous character, he could ever have learnt. An heiress, therefore, was his only alternative. Ellen is that—and, alas, only that. But the whole of her large fortune, with the exception of her uncle's legacy, which is small, passes at once into Fred's hands, for she refused to let her guardian settle any portion of it on herself."

"Of course," said Miss Levingsworth, somewhat indignantly. "I wonder what that stupid old Dutchman could be thinking of when he proposed otherwise? Did he think Fred was to get neither beauty, accomplishments, wit nor beauty? And what a match it is for Ellen. To be married to a man like Frederick—handsome, agreeable, generous, who brings her at once into one of the best families in the union, and into a society so superior to what she has been accustomed to, that I should think she would feel as if she was translated. Indeed, I don't know what more even old Mr. Grotz could have expected for her."

"I doubt whether he values all these advantages," replied Mrs. Fenwick. "He only looks to the money. Of course Ellen must, although she does not show it. Do you know, I sometimes think she is not at her ease with us—that she is afraid of both you and me. I have observed that her hand was cold and trembled as I took it."

"Think so?" said Miss Levingsworth, carelessly. "I doubt it. She seems to me cold and calm enough. Depend upon it, if her hands are cold, it is constitutional. Her sensibility won't disturb her, I'll answer for it."

And thus were the newly-married couple discussed by their friends generally, and the sisters in particular, without the most distant allusion to the pure and warm affections that came with the dower of the young bride, or one thought of the "warm and generous nature" of the groom, who had so avowedly sacrificed himself for wealth, other than of sympathy and affection; for, accustomed to judge from appearances and dwell in externals, it never struck them that there might be that on the part of the wife which was, perhaps, more than an offset against the more brilliant qualities of the husband. In fact, Frederick Levingsworth was one of those charmed individuals who win hearts without merit, and captivate without effort. Handsome, animated and agreeable, he had those lively sensibilities and quick sympathies which pass for strong feelings and warm heart, until tried by the test of action,

and which are apt to deceive not less the possessors than superficial observers. In short, he was social and popular. Every body liked Fred Levingsworth, and every body was glad he had married well. He was what his sisters had called "generous," that is, always ready to give, and quite as ready, it must be admitted, to borrow. Expensive and reckless, with no habits of industry, and no idea of self-denial, that he should soon have involved himself in embarrassments was not surprising. It was the first and natural step of such a character; the second, to make the best of the good looks, good name and good manners his stars had conferred upon him by seeking an heiress, followed as a matter of course. Chance had thrown him in the way of Miss Lane. An orphan, with no one to control or oppose her, she was worth winning. Young and new to the world's ways, she was easily won. And thus was she "translated," as Miss Levingsworth had expressed it, after a few short weeks' acquaintance, from the quiet and hum-drum circle in which her guardian lived, to the more animated and brilliant sphere in which her husband and his family moved. Had he, by any of those accidents or freaks of nature which sometimes do overtake young men, fallen in love with Miss Lane, he might then have felt some embarrassment for the deficiencies in manner and appearance which he knew must strike his family and friends in presenting his bride among them. But having married her for money, he felt that that fortune was apology and explanation for any imputation otherwise resting on his taste. His wife was an heiress, and he knew the gay circle into which he was introducing her well enough to know that she would be received, not without comment and criticism, for that happens to none, but with flattery and attention. For her, therefore, he had no fears—of himself, no doubts. Consequently, when his sisters mourned over his sacrifice, and gave him credit for sustaining himself and wife so well, under what they considered a trying and painful situation, they ended him with sensibilities he did not deserve, and sufferings he did not experience;—while to his young wife, who was quivering in every nerve under the newness of her position and ignorance of all around her, the same hasty and one-sided judgment denied the sympathy that had been so readily accorded to a more graceful manner and winning exterior. In fact, the "translation" was one rather of pain than of pleasure to the bride. Brought up rather in accordance with the simple tastes and plain habits of her father's early life, which had been passed in obscure and laborious toil, than with the brilliant fortune he had been enabled by those habits of toil and gain to bequeath his only child, she had no accomplishments to fit her to adorn, nor tastes calculated to enjoy the gay circle into which she found herself suddenly thrown. Naturally diffident and silent, she saw herself surrounded by strangers who addressed her on topics she did not understand, and upon pleasures in which she could not sympathize. Her range of mind was limited, and culti-

and, consequently, she did not know that she did any thing; for, with the carelessness natural to selfish persons, he took every good as a matter of course, and only observed any deficiency in whatever he might happen to want. Having accompanied his wife to every engagement, and duly introduced her into society, he gave himself scarcely less credit than did his sisters for the full and handsome manner in which he had so far fulfilled the duties of his married life. But now that Ellen was fairly launched into the circle that surrounded her, and well acquainted with the new routine of life just opened to her, he deemed his duty done, and that he might now again return, in some measure, to the clubs and sporting habits of his bachelor days.

"Ellen," said he, one morning, "I told Emily you would take her to-night to Mrs. Ashland's. I suppose you do not care about my going with you, as you have been there once already?"

The surprise and disappointment experienced by Mrs. Levingsworth at the question, deprived her, for a moment, of all power to reply.

"Go alone?" she gasped out, in a few minutes—she, whose only pleasure in frequenting such scenes was in accompanying her husband, and whose only motive for going at all was to please him—"Go alone?"

"Yes, why not?" he said. "Hawthorn will see you to the carriage whenever you want to come away. To-night is the club night, and I have promised to meet the old set."

"If you are engaged, let me send an apology," she urged.

"By no means," he replied. "I wish you to go; and, besides, Emily expects you to matronize her."

The tone of decision in which this was spoken settled the question. In fact, nothing short of the exigency of the case could have urged Ellen to such a point of opposition as she had already shown. The readiness with which he had made separate engagements for her and himself, besides her constitutional dread of strangers, unsupported by his presence, shot a pang through her heart; but she submitted in silence, as was her custom—nor was her husband aware of the sacrifice she was making, nor the bitterness of feeling such a trifle occasioned her. What was thus begun soon became a matter of course. He wished her to keep up her position in society, but it was a bore for him to accompany her there more frequently than appearances required; and, consequently, whenever his sisters had the same engagements, he left her to go with them. Sad and dispirited, therefore, while yet bent on pleasing her husband in all things, poor Ellen went night after night to assemblies for which she had little taste, and where she received no enjoyment, and for which the only credit she got was, that Emily told Mrs. Fenwick, in confidence, "that she thought Ellen was growing duller and duller every day."

"Ellen, why do you not use the carriage oftener? Those horses are getting ruined for the want of

exercise," said Levingsworth. "Shall I order it this morning for you?"

"If you please," she replied.

"If I please?" repeated he, laughing. "I don't please any thing about it, as I am not going. I want you to do just as you like best. If you are not fond of riding, pray walk. It is all one to me."

"It was all one to him!" And there was the sting. If he would have driven her, Ellen would have been too happy to ride, or to walk, if he would have given her his arm. But alone, who can find pleasure? "Happiness is born a twin."

Thus uncared for and neglected, closed the first year of her married life—finding herself unappreciated by her husband, misunderstood by his family, desolate and alone in the midst of all that should adorn and enliven existence.

CHAPTER II.

"Noble vengeance! Ille tailla pour Dieu le diamant
brut rejeté par l'homme."—BALZAC.

THE sad and weary months had passed in that flat and cheerless lassitude which follows the first disappointment in married life, when a new era was opened to Ellen in the birth of a daughter. The feelings which had been chilled and repressed by Levingsworth and his family, now gushed forth over the little being whom she clasped to her breast and covered with kisses, with more even than a mother's love. Here her loving but proud heart could pour forth the treasures of its affections without fear or shame. She dreaded no coldness in those young eyes; no playful mockery round that little mouth; and the crowning smiles that returned her caresses were hailed as the sympathy for which her overburthened heart craved, with rapture, by the young mother.

The cares and somewhat delicate health attendant on the birth of a young infant, formed also an excuse for her withdrawal from the gaiety which had always been distasteful to her, that was readily comprehended and received by her husband, whose careless good nature made him always willing to oblige and gratify the wishes of his wife when he could do so without inconvenience to himself, and which he would have done more frequently had he always known in what those wishes consisted. But Ellen's, as we have said, though a loving, was a proud heart; and what her husband did not divine, she never told. Instinct, sympathy, love revealed his wants to her, and if no answering feeling betrayed hers to him, her lips never should. Here she was wrong. A more frank and communicative disposition would have won her, perhaps, more affection from him, and certainly more comfort for herself; but this was not in her nature. Too delicate and too proud for the careless and common characters around her, she suffered in silence, and made sacrifices as unknown as unappreciated. A new light, however, was now shed

over her existence, and the happy hours she passed in her nursery made amends for almost every other disappointment.

The summer and autumn months glided rapidly and happily on, and winter had once more returned. Levingsworth had invited his sister to pass the winter with them, and his wife had, with her usual gentleness, assented, although it was not exactly what she would have preferred, as she was somewhat afraid of the quick wit and lively turn for satire of her fair sister-in-law, and, besides, had hoped for a more quiet season than her sojourn with them would permit.

"Fred," said Miss Levingsworth, a few mornings after her arrival, "do you hold yourself in readiness to go with us to-night to Mrs. Ashland's?"

"Are you going, Ellen?" he said, turning to his wife.

"No," she replied, "not unless you particularly wish it. Emily is going with your sister Mrs. Franklin."

"If Mary takes you, Emily," he said, "I need not go with you. You do not care about it, do you?"

"Yes, to be sure I do. Franklin can't or won't go with us, and I always like to have a beau of my own to call the carriage and look after me, particularly when he is such a stylish one as you are," she replied, gaily; "so you need not think to get off."

"Nonsense," answered he, though smiling. "You don't want me."

"But I do," persisted his sister, "and you are going."

"Well, if you say I must, I suppose I must, for you were always wilful, Emily, about having your own way," said Levingsworth, half impatiently, though half flattered by her pertinacity, while his wife looked up in surprise at the hardihood that combated her husband's wishes, which was succeeded by a sigh at the playful and affectionate familiarity before which those wishes so readily yielded. What would she not have given to have dared address him so? Why was she not privileged to speak thus? And she was almost jealous of the frank and fearless affection that subsisted between the brother and sister.

Emily was very pretty, and Levingsworth was proud of her; and, therefore, although forced to Mrs. Ashland's against his will, he returned animated and in spirits. Ellen gladly availed herself of every opportunity to yield the task of chaperoning her sister-in-law to others, and it soon became a matter of course, when discussing any party, to say, "You don't go, I suppose, Ellen?—then Fred must." And Levingsworth no longer remonstrated when Emily called upon him to accompany her into society; for, proud of her beauty, and flattered by the admiration she excited, and without his wife, who had always been more or less upon his mind in those gay scenes, old feelings returned with the old circumstances, and he rather enjoyed the parties he had so lately voted a bore. Ellen marked the change; and the "you don't go, I suppose, Ellen?"

which, at first, had been a relief to her, became a source of irritation and pain, as it became a matter of course. Not that she wished to go, but she was deeply wounded by the carelessness with which she was left at home.

"Ellen does not like this," and "Ellen does not like that," was settled by the brother and sister without any reference to Ellen herself; and it was not that, on the whole, they decided wrong, but that the thoughtlessness and inattention with which the decision was made, pained her. She would have been gratified had she been sometimes asked, and delighted had she ever been urged to accompany them, as, in fact, she would have been, had either of them cared about her going. It was this indifference, this selfish forgetfulness, that drew tears from her eyes night after night, as her husband drove off with his sister. Soon, however, this feeling gave place to one of a far quicker and sharper nature. It happened that she had heard Emily and her husband allude frequently to a Mrs. Asden; and some one of their lively guests, one day, had spoken of her as "Levingsworth's new belle." The phrase was accidentally used, but jealousy was roused, and she thought she saw at once the reason why she was so quietly left at home, and why Levingsworth had become all at once so good-naturedly Emily's escort to every place of gay resort; and, emboldened by the tortures of this new feeling, she resolved to join her husband and his sister on the first occasion, where she might see her she fancied her rival.

"Invitations from Mrs. Ashland again," said Emily. "I shall go; so remember, Fred, and keep yourself disengaged. Shall I refuse for you, as usual, Ellen?"

"No," said Mrs. Levingsworth, quickly; "I will go."

The decision with which she spoke gave almost a sharpness to her tone, that caused her husband to look up with surprise, as he said—"This is something new."

She coloured deeply, as she answered—"It is so long since I have been out, I should like to see a ball-room again."

And Ellen only thought—"What caprice is this, I wonder, that she has taken in her head?" as she answered the notes.

"Show me Mrs. Asden," said Ellen to her sister-in-law, when they arrived at Mrs. Ashland's.

"There she stands, just by the pier-glass."

"That dark woman, with the crimson fez?"

"Yes."

"But do you think her handsome?" pursued Ellen, in a tone half of disappointment and half of relief.

"Handsome? No, certainly. Who does call her so?"

"Why, Frederick. Do you not think Mrs. Asden handsome?" she said, eagerly turning to her husband.

"Never dreamt of such a thing," said he, laughing. "What put that in your head? You may

have heard me say that she dressed so well she almost passed for it. But she is plain—would be so, decidedly, if it were not for that."

The relief Ellen experienced on hearing these words can scarcely be imagined. And the new light, the new hope, too, they inspired. Here was a woman who was avowedly ugly, confessed to be very plain, and yet who excited admiration and produced an effect. There was something, then, that would supply the place of beauty. What was it? Dress. And anxiously did she study that of Mrs. Asden. How her heart throbbed with hope and delight as she gazed upon her. The next morning she drove to Mrs. II's and ordered a head-dress in the same style as Mrs. Asden's, and procured a dress as nearly like as possible, without being the same, and impatiently awaited the next party to try her new experiment. It soon occurred, and, dressing herself with unusual care, she prepared for Mrs. Franklin's.

Levingsworth was, as usual, a little late, and, consequently, the ladies were already cloaked before he joined them, and his wife had no opportunity of judging of the effect of her dress upon him until he saw her in the full blaze of Mrs. Franklin's wax lights. She then saw him glance at her with a look of surprise, and heard him say, with a smile, in a low tone, to Emily—"What on earth has Ellen got on her head?" At which, her sister-in-law looked at her with an expression of amusement, as she made some answer, the words of which she could not catch, and turned away. Ellen felt herself colour deeply, although she knew not why, and her husband approached with the same peculiar smile that had startled her when he spoke to Emily, and said—

"Where did you get that head-dress?"

"At Madame H's," she replied. "Do you like it?"

"No," he answered, shaking his head; "I cannot say I do. Pray, never wear it again."

"I thought you admired Mrs. Asden's," said his wife, deeply mortified, "and so I ordered one like it."

"I don't think her's was like that," he said, carelessly. "It certainly looked differently."

Any one who has ever dreamed that they found themselves in a gay assemblage, and then somehow awoke suddenly to the consciousness of having their night-cap on, may, perhaps, have some faint idea of the sensations experienced by Ellen, as her husband turned away unconscious of the pain he had inflicted. Mortified and abashed, Ellen knew not why that which had been so much admired on another, should produce so contrary an effect on her. She saw that there was no particular admiration on her husband's part towards Mrs. Asden to blind him, and, consequently, her inability to please him struck her more deeply and painfully than ever. The truth was, that Mrs. Asden, although far from handsome, was a very stylish-looking woman—that kind of person upon whom odd and peculiar things produce an effect that fail on others; and the

head-dress that Ellen had chanced to see her in first, was one of those marked things that, worn by her, was striking and piquant, but, on poor Ellen, was only *outré*. Not having that discrimination which only education or a quick eye can give, to discern all this, Ellen had, therefore, in departing from her usual simplicity, when she was safe in her insignificance, boldly touched upon the absurd. Humbled and heart-stricken, she returned home, her visions having failed her, without any farther desire of again accompanying Emily and Levingsworth; and once more centering heart and soul in her nursery, she tried to withdraw her mind from the trials of her lot, and in the fulfilment of her duties find that consolation which her sorrowing spirit needed. As years went on, the added cares of a larger family engrossed more of her attention and occupied her mind, and, perhaps, would have secured her much of happiness, had not new troubles darkened about her. Levingsworth had, in the first novelty of coming into possession of so large a property, been content with merely expending the income in horses, entertainments, &c. But as habit somewhat blunted the zest of these pleasures, and wanting new excitement, he easily became the prey of those who are always ready to hang upon and flatter the unwary and rich, to enter into speculations which were, in fact, only a more respectable kind of gambling. These, from being at first successful, soon became ruinous, and the large fortune which Ellen had brought him was now slipping from his fingers with alarming rapidity. Desperate, he madly struck at every thing instead of at once withdrawing from a contest with sharper wits, for which he was most unequal. Ellen was only aware that some of her husband's investments had been unfortunate, and, therefore, she retrenched in every branch of the household economy that fell within her department. All she could do, however, was but a drop in the ocean—for it had been one of her trials, and one that her husband never suspected, to be always cramped for money. Now, this was one of the evils of her proud and reserved nature. Levingsworth was one of the most liberal men in the world when he had money, but with the carelessness so common to selfish characters, he seldom thought of offering his wife that which she never asked, and she was too proud to *ask* for what was not offered. This asking for money is a more painful thing to women than men are always aware of. To Ellen it was torture, and she never had recourse to it except when impelled by household necessities. The income of the legacy left her by her uncle had always been paid into her own hands, and that she had made use of for her own and children's personal wants. Thus, in the midst of abundance, she had always been in the habit of exercising a strictness of economy which had sometimes attracted her husband's attention, and at which he had only laughed without divining the cause, and which had made his sisters shrug their shoulders, and settle between themselves "that Ellen was very mean."

There was but one point on which she had never yet been willing to economize—the education of her children. It was curious to see the attention and anxiety she bestowed upon a subject, the importance of which most persons would have scarcely supposed her a competent judge. Her great desire seemed that they should be highly accomplished, and she took the utmost pains to secure them the most approved masters.

"What chatter boxes those girls are," said Mrs. Franklin, one day, as Ellen's two eldest daughters sat at the farther extremity of the room talking together.

"Are they?" said Ellen, looking up with an expression of extreme pleasure. "I am glad you think so."

"Why?" inquired Mrs. Fenwick, with some surprise.

"Oh, it is such a happiness," said Ellen, earnestly.

"What, to talk?" said Mrs. Fenwick, laughing.

"Yes," continued Ellen; "they will tell all they think and feel." And she looked at her darlings with an expression that, for the first time, gave her sister-in-law some faint insight into the peculiarities of her character.

Levingsworth's pecuniary difficulties continued to thicken about him, and, at last, the crash came; and Ellen learnt, not without bitter sorrow, that the bright inheritance of her children had passed away. But still, her deepest regrets, her warmest sympathies were for her husband. Her children were yet young, and wealth, she well knew, brought with it no happiness of itself. She had still a competence left for them. But her husband—how would he bear the privations he must now endure; and she thought, too, of his mortifications in feeling himself to have thus wasted the birthright of his children, and she grieved for him in spirit. Here, however, she invested him with sensibilities he did not experience. Levingsworth looked upon himself as unfortunate, but not blameable.

To change the whole style of their establishment was a matter of course, and their quiet and simple manner of living now comported better with Mrs. Levingsworth's tastes than with that of their more prosperous days. Surrounded by a growing family of sons and daughters, whose enthusiastic affection for their mother surprised their father's friends, Ellen would have asked no more, could she have seen her husband happy. But privations suited ill with his selfish and luxurious habits. In vain did his wife deny herself, and exert all her womanly and housewife skill to supply him with the comforts he had been accustomed to. In vain were her many and nameless sacrifices made. They could not restore him luxury at home and consequence abroad, and the change was deeply felt—souring a temper naturally exacting.

By-and-by came one of those sudden and fallacious bursts of prosperity, when stocks rise and fortunes are made (or said to be) from nothing, and Levingsworth chafed and then rebelled against the

powerless inactivity he had felt at first to be his lot. Now, a few thousand dollars might retrieve the past, if fortune was taken at the flood. "His wife must sign off." The idea no sooner occurred to his mind than it was seized upon with avidity. Ellen would have remonstrated had she dared, but her courage failed her when her husband said, impatiently—"It is but a trifle." She had never been used to oppose him, and it seemed scarcely generous now to take advantage of her power to thwart him—but her heart died within her as she put her signature to the paper.

Ellen's mind was narrow and contracted, as we have said, but it was true and upright; and she had a vague and general sense that her husband's views were scheming and unsafe. But with no power of expressing this inward conviction—no capacity for clothing her instinctive but just feelings in a tangible and outward form, what could she do but submit, as she had always done, in silence. What was thus done once, she was called upon again to do; and, although the sums were comparatively small each time, yet an alarming inroad was soon made upon their little principal. Her old friend and early guardian, Mr. Grotz, now called upon her, and, as her father's friend and her own trustee, remonstrated seriously with her on the course she was pursuing. He reminded her of the duty she owed her children, and that the beggary with which they were now threatened would be her own act.

She wept bitterly—for her conscience told her that the reproaches the old man did not spare her were merited. She felt that she had let the feelings of the wife prevail over her sense of duty as a mother, and that she had been unjust to her children rather than oppose her husband; and Mr. Grotz did not leave her until he had exacted a solemn promise that she would be firm for the future, and not call upon him again.

Soon, however, was this resolution put cruelly to the test; for Levingsworth, ever sanguine and speculative, would once more try his fortune in some new scheme. The painfulest of all trials now awaited her—to adjust opposing duties and conflicting affections; and had she not been bound by her promise to her guardian, she would probably have yielded under the contest.

Astonished at this opposition on her part, her husband gave way to a burst of passion that almost overwhelmed her; and, with more self-command, returning soon again to the subject, condescended, for the first time in his life, to explain his views and enlarge upon his hopes; but she could only weep and answer—"I cannot consent to beggar my children of the little that remains." To which he impatiently exclaimed—"Can't you understand that it is to benefit them as well as us?" And then he commenced again the whole argument, with added irritability and minuteness, as if he thought her dulness of comprehension the only obstacle in his way. Poor Ellen was cruelly wounded, for she felt keenly what his manner implied; but she knew not how to tell him that she distrusted the

judgment which had deceived him so often, and felt no right to embark their little all in a vision. The subject was renewed again and again, and each time with similar results; and Levingsworth's passion rose high, and the muttered words "stupid, obstinate fool," escaped his lips, and then Ellen felt as if she could have laid her down and died.

Soon was she attacked in a new shape, and one for which she was not prepared. Her husband asked her signature for that which he told her was no sale; and then he talked of trusts and mortgages, and made use of business terms which she did not understand—but ended in distinctly, though somewhat impatiently, assuring her she was not parting with her property in signing the paper he placed before her. She complied; and the next day brought her old guardian, Mr. Grotz, with grave looks and severe words, to reproach her with breach of faith in having violated the promise so lately given him; and then Ellen eagerly attempted to explain that which her husband had told her, and earnestly assured her guardian it was no sale.

"Then, my child," said Mr. Grotz, earnestly, "your husband has deceived you. I tell you you have parted with your last and richest farm; and, untrue as Levingsworth has always been, he has played you false in this. Promise me to put your signature to nothing another time until you have seen and consulted me."

With pale and quivering lips, the promise was given, and firmly was it adhered to—but from that day forth the springs of life were sapped. Ellen's upright mind and strict principles were horror-stricken at the deception practised upon her, and her heart revolted against the injustice done her motives. The passionate love for her children, and her consciousness of fulfilling her duty, had sustained her until now. But the object for which she had lived and struggled—the education and independence of her children—was now partially attained, and she felt that she could endure it but little longer—that the end was near. And never were the sacrifices of a mother's love more devotedly and enthusiastically returned than by the family for which she had suffered and loved so much. Young and unsophisticated hearts will yield affection for affection, and requite sacrifices with devotion. Others looked on in surprise at the excessive attachment of Ellen's children, and Levingsworth almost resented the affection which he could not understand, and of which he felt himself thus defrauded as of his due. Weaker and weaker grew the so idolized mother; and, at last, her gentle spirit passed away, and she sank to that rest for which her whole life had been a preparation.

Passionately was she wept and long was she mourned by her children; and when she was no longer there to minister to his comforts, and watch his wishes, and anticipate his wants, did Levingsworth begin to feel "that he had entertained an angel unaware."

"But tears are a most worthless token
When hearts they would have soothed are broken."

THE ARTIST'S DISAPPOINTMENT.

BY MRS. E. F. ELLET.

It was rather late in the evening of a day in autumn, 182-, that two well-dressed persons were seen standing before a small house in one of the principal streets of Milan. They leaned against the railing at the foot of the steps, and were listening with such apparent attention, that their attitude and employment might have excited observation, but that a certain high-bred air indicated them to be above suspicion, and the delicious music heard from the house fully justified them in pausing to listen.

The music was low, plaintive and touching, and accompanied by a clear and melodious male voice. Now and then it swelled into deeper pathos, the voice being evidently interrupted by sobs; and one of the listeners, deeply moved, turned aside to brush a tear from his eyes. After it had continued some time with these alternations of harmonious complaint, it was suddenly broken off, and a dead silence succeeded.

"Poor Antonio!" said one of the gentlemen, with a deep sigh; "this affliction will kill him."

"Nay," answered his companion, "I have no fear. He has youth, health, ambition, to sustain him; and though I know he feels——"

"But you know not Antonio as I do, Ronza," rejoined the other. "It is the exquisite sensibility of his nature, the deep and passionate feeling hid under his graceful and composed exterior, that, even more than qualities merely professional, has contributed to his fame as the first of modern singers. And this exquisitely toned instrument, that yields such melody to the lightest touch, may be as easily shattered."

"He loved his mother devotedly; but—*cielo*—did he expect to survive her?"

"Ah! she was more than mother to him; he owed her his intellectual, his spiritual being. She directed his pure soul to the enjoyments alone fitted for him; she led him to the shrine of Art. No, Ronza, do not blame his grief."

"I do not blame it. I only say that the deepest wound even in natures like his, may the sooner be healed. But let us go in."

The two friends ascended the steps, and knocked. They were admitted, and as they anticipated, found the person they had come to seek, plunged in a grief that defied all consolation—the more to be dreaded, as his outward manner was cold and calm. It was the snow upon the mountain, whose breast was consuming in volcanic fires.

"And yet I am grateful for your coming," he said, after every commonplace source of consolation had been exhausted in their kind efforts to

divert his mind from the contemplation of the calamity that had crushed him. "I cannot now say how grateful, but you will forgive my lack of words. Will you pardon, also, Count Albert, my entreating you to take charge of these papers?"

And opening a drawer, he took out several letters and handed them to the count.

"How—you do not now think of leaving Milan?"

"No—but I retire from the world. To-morrow I enter the Convent di ——."

Count Albert di Gaïta and the Marchese di Ronza exchanged looks of dismay.

"So sudden a project ——."

"It is not sudden. My resolution has been formed since the day of my mother's death, and my application was forwarded immediately. I expect a reply to it every hour."

"You have been imprudent, my friend," said the Marchese. "You will regret the precipitation of this step."

"And what have I now to live for?" asked the mourner, bitterly.

"For fame," replied di Ronza.

"For art," said Count Albert.

The bereaved artist shook his head.

"When, at eighteen years of age," he said, "I met with my first triumph at Bologna; when the public far and near were pleased to applaud me, what, think you, was my joy in the enthusiasm I awakened? That *she* rejoiced in my success; that *she* encouraged me to persevering effort; that I was earning honour and competence for her enjoyment in old age. Now I have lost my only stimulus to exertion; I have lost my love of art; my faculties are paralyzed."

"This is not natural," observed the Marchese, gravely.

"But it is truth. The world is a desert to me; I leave it. The church offers me an asylum. I accept it as a refuge where I can bear with me her memory—for whom alone I wished to live!"

"Your friends," said di Ronza, somewhat haughtily, "may not thank you for your exclusion of them. You have many to whom your success is a part of their daily joy. And yet, gifted with health, beauty, genius, not yet twenty-five, you would hide yourself in the cowl and scapulary from the admiration of men—the love of woman ——."

The mourner gave an involuntary and impatient gesture. The Marchese saw that his brow was crimson, and a new light seemed to break on Ronza's mind, for a meaning smile played for an instant on his lip. It was gone before either of his companions perceived it.

"Before we part," asked he, "will you sing us this air from the *Cenerentola*?" and he took up a leaf of music.

"Nay," interposed Count Albert, "it is wrong to ask this. How unsuitable this song to the gloom of his feelings!"

"The better, that the power of music may for an instant dispel his melancholy thoughts. Come, Antonio, I will join you."

Antonio complied, and seated himself at the piano to sing. Ronza accompanied him, watching him closely all the while, and nodded his head with an expression of satisfaction when the air was concluded.

There was a knock at the door; Antonio arose from the instrument. The *portiere* entered, and handed him a letter. He begged pardon of his friends, and broke the seal; glanced over the contents, and buried his face in his hands.

The friends sat in silent sympathy. At length, in obedience to a sign from the mourner, Count Albert took the letter up and read it. It was an answer from the superiors of the Convent di ———. His application was rejected; their doors were closed against "an actor."

Courteously as the denial was expressed, it was evident that Antonio felt the implied insult to his profession; and indignation for the moment rose above his grief.

"The creed is indeed exclusive," he said, bitterly, "that refuses an actor space for repentance and preparation for death."

"They are right," said the Marchese, somewhat abruptly. "What sort of a monk would you make, Antonio mio! Your sorrow is profound, but it must in time abate; your heart will rise from its depression; you will feel once again the impulse of genius and ambition."

"Never!" interrupted the artist.

"I tell you, you will. I am old in the world, and, therefore, a true prophet. You will, and the time is not far distant. In the convent, your eyes would be opened, only that you might see the gloom surrounding you; your wings would expand, only that you might feel the weight that chained them to earth—forever! For I know you well enough to know that once fettered by the vows, you would die ere fling them off! They are right; they foresee the result. Be warned in time!"

"My resolution is unalterable," said Antonio. "Milan is not the world. In four days I shall leave it, and seek elsewhere the asylum I cannot obtain here. I am heart-broken and wretched; I cannot live among the scenes and associations of my past life. Better for me the grave of the suicide!"

"This must be remedied, and speedily," said Count Albert to his companion, after they had quitted their friend, whose sufferings seemed in no degree alleviated by their sympathy, "or nature will give way. That wild look of anguish; that fevered flush; the hurried and abrupt movement; the visible emaciation of his whole frame; all these

make me shudder. An organization so susceptible, so delicate, cannot withstand so mighty a shock. Suffer this grief to prey upon him, and in three months he will fall its victim."

"You are right," replied di Ronza. "There is danger, and it must be averted. The world has no overplus of genius and worth, that we can afford to lose a *Tamburini*."

"But the means——."

"I have thought, and still think of them. Join me at my lodgings at ten. For the present I have an engagement. *A rivederci*."

And the friends separated.

The scene was a handsomely furnished drawing-room in the house of Madame Gioja. This lady,—French by birth, celebrated for her many graces and accomplishments,—was the daughter of the Count Gaëtani, and wedded in early youth to the Marquis de Miriallia. His jealous love for the beautiful creature he had espoused prompted his last will, which made the forfeiture of his fortune the penalty of her second marriage. Surrounded by luxury and admiration, moving in the most exalted circles, the lovely widow cast her eyes upon a young artist, dependent on his profession for support. Love proved stronger than ambition, and she gave up splendour to share the lot of the poor man whom her heart had chosen. Her friends were indignant; she was deprived of her liberty; but being afterwards released from imprisonment, she left her native country to lead a wandering life, consoled for all her sacrifices by the love of her husband and children.

Madame Gioja was reading by a small table in the centre of the room. A young girl of exquisite beauty was playing at the piano, sometimes accompanying the music with her voice; and ever and anon the elderly lady would look up from her book with a glance so full of tenderness and pride, that the spectator needed not to have observed the striking resemblance between the two to be certain of their relationship. The looks were such as only beam from a mother's eyes upon a beloved and only daughter.

"The Marchese di Ronza," said the *portiere*, throwing open the door.

Madame Gioja rose to receive her guest. The visit was unusual from one of rank so high; for the lady, be it remembered, had descended in marrying to the condition of her husband, and he was no associate of nobles. But she had in youth been familiar with courts and princes, and in grace and dignity she was not changed, so that though surprised at the visit, no princess could have received it with greater self-possession and composure.

The Marchese paid his respects to the lady, then turned to her daughter, who had risen from the piano, and fixed on her so prolonged a gaze, that the mother was startled and somewhat offended. She replied very gravely to some casual remark of her guest, and the young girl, who seemed aware that there was an embarrassment, blushed deeply.

Ronza saw he had committed an error, and said with a serious air to Madame Gioja—

"May I crave the favour, madame, of a few moments' conversation with you on business?"

"Certainly," answered the lady; and turning to her daughter, "You may retire, my dear Marietta."

The young lady left the room. The Marchese remained a few moments silent, as if considering how he should introduce what he had to say. At length he said, abruptly—

"My business concerns the Signorina, as well as yourself. It is for your permission for her to sing in part of a new piece by Mercadante, to be immediately produced."

Madame Gioja hesitated.

"I have cultivated my daughter's talent for music to the utmost," said she, "and yet I tremble to decide on her choice of the art as a profession. She is so young, so sensitive, so ill able to sustain herself against the many trials of an artiste—"

"And is it you who talks thus?" asked the Marchese, surprised. "You, who sacrificed opulence, rank, friends, for the love of art—to share the fortunes of a votary of music!"

"I am the better able," said the lady, smiling, "to judge of its consolations. Of its triumphs I say nothing; for I would not have Marietta influenced by the least whisper of vanity in her choice for life!"

"You are then undetermined as to your daughter's embracing the profession of music?" cried Ronza, astonished. "You have, perhaps, other views—other designs for her?"

"Signore?" said the mother, evidently not understanding the drift of the question.

"Nay," said the Marchese, recovering himself, "it is not right to ask such questions, at least, without confiding our whole project to you, madame. And first, have no fears as to granting my request. It is only before a select audience that I wish your daughter to sing."

"Then my permission is freely granted," replied the lady.

"A word more. You are aware, madame, of the recent misfortune of our friend Tamburini?"

"The death of his mother? Ah! it was a terrible blow. I am told he bears it not with resignation."

"Alas! madame, the blow may cost him his life. Driven by grief to despair, he has already applied for admission into the Convent —"

"This is dreadful!" exclaimed the lady; and Ronza saw that her cheek grew pale.

"His application," he continued, "has been refused, as it ought to be, and he is now resolved on quitting Milan. You know Antonio; you know him to be one of those fiery spirits, impatient of suffering, ready to plunge into imprudence, and obstinate against opposition. The only hope of saving him is to reawaken his ambition—his impulse for art."

"And how can that be done?"

"By a master stroke, if at all; and in this I crave your aid. Your daughter—I have seen it—has

much influence over our spoiled artist. I have seen his emotion when she sang, at your private concerts."

"You overrate her powers," said the mother, reservedly. "But her aid and mine shall be cheerfully given to any enterprise that promises to divert the grief of our valued friend. Your wish is—"

"Simply, that she will take a part in the *Posto Abbandonato*, in an act of which he will appear. A few select friends are to be the audience. I will have the piece sent her immediately."

"I promise for her."

"I thank you, madame, and the world will thank you," cried the Marchese, as he paid his parting salutations and hastened to his rendezvous with the count.

But the mother found opposition where she had not counted upon it—from the young lady herself. Marietta seemed the more averse to the proposition, the more she was reasoned with about it; and her own reasons for her reluctance were, as a petted young girl's are sometimes apt to be, so frivolous, that they vexed Madame Gioja. Was it obstinacy or coquetry, thought she; but her daughter was ever wont to be complying, and above all artifice. She told Marietta there was no receding from her word pledged for her compliance; and then, though with not a little pouting, the young lady set about learning the part assigned to her.

The preparations of Tamburini for leaving Milan were complete. The amateurs of the city were in despair; but no entreaties could move his determination. Count Albert passed with him the afternoon of his last day, to be crowned, according to the earnest solicitation of numerous friends, by a private concert, in which the already famous singer was to gratify them for the last time. It was to be his adieu to them, to music and the world.

"You will have the goodness also, dear Count, to have this package delivered after my departure. It is a selection of the best pieces of opera music in my collection, with the great works of Gluck. Ah! he was once my favourite master."

"Have you lost your taste for his compositions?"

"No; but I can no longer do them justice. I am an ingrate, for if I ever had aught of energy, fire or force, I owe it to him. What strength, what soul there is in his creations! How they task the noblest faculties! Passion they have, but more than passion; it is the very mind, the genius of tragedy."

The count read the direction on the package—it was addressed "To Mademoiselle Marietta Gioja."

"There is another of my lost divinities," said Antonio, with a melancholy smile. "I might"—and his face flushed deeply as he spoke—"had I risen to the summit I once hoped to attain, to an eminence that would have conferred distinction on those I loved, I might have dared to offer her the homage of my heart. Beautiful as she is, the perfections of her person are surpassed by her mental

lowliness; and oh, what angelic goodness! But I must not speak of her; it makes me bitter to think in what a delusion I have indulged."

"Believe it, believe it yet!" cried Albert, grasping his friend's hand.

"No; I am now fully awakened. What a mockery to think of one elevated so far above me! Her aristocratic descent, the pride of her mother's family,—the claims of these might have been satisfied, had I lived to realize my lofty visions! But they are dispelled, and I have resigned this sweetest hope of all; cherishing only the thought that she will not perhaps disdain my last gift; that these noble and glorious works may sometimes recall to her mind the memory of one who, had he proved worthy, would have dared to love her."

"This is folly!" exclaimed the count. "You are depressed, and the world seems dark to you. With time, the soother of sorrow—"

"You mistake, my dear friend. It is not the pressure of grief alone that weighs me down, and has crushed my energies. I were not a man had I not within me a principle that could bear up against the heaviest calamity. But," and he laid his hand impressively on Albert's arm, "heard you never of the *death of enthusiasm*?"

His friend sighed deeply.

"It is thus with me. I have nothing now to offer at the shrine of art. Shall I present her with a cold and soulless votary, rifled of his treasure of youth, and faith, and hope? Shall I, whose spirit has flagged in the race, long ere the goal was won, pluck at inferior honours? Shall I cumber the arena to dishearten others, when I can obtain no prize? How am I to inspire the public with confidence when I have lost it in myself? How can I kindle passion in others, who am dead to its fires? No, Count Albert, I have become insensible to the deepest, the highest wonders of music. I will not insult her by a dragging, desperate mediocrity. I will not impede the advance of better spirits. I have fallen in the battle—the honours of victory are not for me."

It was melancholy to see this paralysis, this prostration of a noble spirit! And yet, how to combat it? Argument was in vain, and he rejoiced when this painful interview was at an end. It was already evening, and time to go to the concert; the carriage was at the door. The count took his friend's arm and led him down. Not a word was exchanged as they drove on, till they drew up and alighted at their place of destination.

It was at the house of a distinguished amateur that this final concert was to take place, and the saloon had been fitted up as a small theatre. A select number of auditors—many more, however, than the performers had expected—were seated at the upper end of the room. The stage was brilliantly lighted, and the scenery so well painted and so admirably arranged as almost to bewilder the senses with illusion. All that taste and poetry could devise, lent their enchantment to the scene.

Those who have observed the effect of sudden

excitement on minds long and deeply depressed,—that is, on temperaments highly susceptible,—may conceive the conflict of emotion in the breast of Antonio, as he found himself thus unexpectedly surrounded by the external splendour and beauty of scenic art. He had anticipated meeting with a few friends, to sing with them a farewell song. What meant these flowery wreaths, this blaze of light, this luxury of painting? The orchestra struck up; their music seemed to penetrate his inmost soul; the revulsion of feeling kindled a wild energy within him. He felt, and at once, almost the inspiration of early youth. Though convinced it was but momentary, he yielded to the impulse and advanced upon the stage.

His symmetrical and noble figure, the grace and expression of his movements, the mind beaming from his features, would at any time have prepossessed an audience in his favour. Under the present affecting circumstances, appealing to every heart, the welcome was tumultuous and long. Tamburini, as he acknowledged it, recovered his melancholy composure. It was destined soon to be overthrown.

At a little distance from him stood the heroine of the piece; like him, bewildered at the novelty of her position and the splendour of her reception, and blushing in much confusion. Could Antonio believe his eyes? It was Marietta Gioja!

With an involuntary exclamation of surprise, he hastened towards her. He did not perceive either pride or coquetry in her evident avoidance of him. But there was no time for explanations. The music played on, and both performed their parts to the rapturous delight of all who listened.

At last the curtain fell. The young debutante was standing upon the stage; she turned to go, but at the instant her hand was clasped by Antonio and covered with burning kisses.

"Marietta, dear Marietta, how can I thank you for this?"

She struggled to withdraw her hand; she repelled him haughtily. He saw that her face was bathed in tears.

"For pity's sake, Marietta, tell me how I have offended you!"

"Let me go, sir; it is all I ask!"

But love was stronger than reason or reserve. The torrent had burst its bounds, and it must overflow. In language impassioned as his own heart, irrepresible as the burning lava of a volcano, he poured forth the love so long nourished in secret. He told her of his hopes and fears—all, all swallowed up in earnest, ardent devotion! The tide of feeling had swept down at once both memory and resolution.

The hues of the rose and lily chased each other rapidly across the cheek of the beautiful girl. Suddenly, at a rustling in the silken folds that veiled them from a view of the audience, she snatched her hands from her lover and rushed off the stage.

Antonio was about to follow her, when Madame Gioja appeared. She led by the hand her trembling and blushing daughter.

"My daughter came hither in obedience to my commands," said she; "and now Marietta, that your bashful scruples are satisfied, and there is no danger that our friend can charge you with any unmaidenly project for storming his heart, you may as well tell him that you love him in sincerity, though in truth this scene is not the fittest for a real declaration. Since it must be, however, take my blessing, dear children!"

There was a continued clamour without, and frequent cries of "Tamburini." Presently a corner of the curtain was raised, and the Marchese di Ronza appeared, his face radiant with benevolent joy.

"I have the happiness to announce to you, my friends, that our distinguished and well beloved Antonio has concluded to defer, indefinitely, his departure from Milan. You will dispense, therefore, with his farewell at present. I have reason to hope that he will ere long favour us with his performance through the whole piece of the *Posto Abbandonato*, and congratulate you, as well as myself, upon the certainty that he has no idea of abandoning his post!"

Loud, heartfelt and rapturous was the cheering that greeted this announcement. Tamburini heard and wondered in his new born happiness how he could ever have yielded to despair.

Thus was a great artist rescued from self-despondency and restored to the world. The disappointment of his first project of turning recluse, was made to bring forth wholesome fruit. But the Marchese, whose plan of a surprise had so admirably succeeded, was never willing to give love all the credit he deserved. As to Madame Gioja, she knew the human heart, and wondered not at the result.

A short time after, the nuptials of Marietta and Antonio were celebrated. Though he cherished with veneration to the end of his life the memory of his mother, yet never again did he yield to that self-distrust and despair, which in the true artist is burying the talent committed to him.

It was near sunset on a bright and warm day in September, 182-, that a gentleman and lady, dressed in travelling attire, might have been seen descending the steps of a palazzo fronting on one of the principal canals of Venice. They were followed by an attendant, another having gone before with their luggage, and deposited it in a plain looking gondola fastened at the foot of the steps. The travellers took their seats in this gondola, and as they pushed off, observed two gentlemen ascend the steps of the house they had just quitted, and ring at the door. While they were talking with the porter, a turn in the canal carried the gondola out of sight.

"Who knows what we have escaped, Marietta, cara?" said the male passenger. "If my eyes inform me rightly, one of yon cavaliers is Signor Bordini, a friend of the Impressario here, come doubtless to tempt me with some new piece, and urge me to stay."

"I should not regret an accident that kept us longer in Venice," observed the lady. "You are, I know, well appreciated."

"We will return; oh, yes! We are not bidding a long adieu to the sea-born city. But I must not disappoint our friends at Trieste."

"How lovely a scene!" exclaimed the lady, after a pause of some length.

And in truth it was beautiful. The sun had set, but his beams yet lingered on the towers and cupolas of the palaces of Venice, and on the light clouds that overhung them like a canopy of gold. They had passed from the canal, where light boats were shooting to and fro in every direction, and the sound of footsteps and lively voices filled the air, into one of the lagunes, where a complete stillness prevailed, broken only by the plash of the water as the oars dipped, and the gentle ripple as the boat swept on, and the softened, distant murmur of human life and motion in a great city. The moon rose large, and round, and bright, in the east. There was a delicious mistiness in the atmosphere that mellowed every object; a dreamy and luxurious softening, like the languor that enhances the charms of an oriental beauty. At no great distance lay the vessel that was to convey the passengers to Trieste, waiting for them and the hour appointed to set sail.

"See that large gondola yonder!" said the lady, laying her hand suddenly on her husband's arm. "How gracefully it glides over the waters; and it seems to follow straight on our course."

It came onward, indeed, with almost incredible velocity; and was now near enough for them to observe that it was painted black, and moreover of a somewhat peculiar construction.

"It is a government boat," said the man.

"She has armed men on board," remarked their attendant. "She bears directly upon us."

"Antonio!" exclaimed the lady, pressing close to her husband with an expression of apprehension.

"Be not alarmed, Marietta mia; they mean us no harm—though sooth to say, it is somewhat discourteous to follow us so closely. Hold there," he cried to the gondolier; "let us rest a moment and see what they want with us."

The gondolier backed water with his oars so dexterously, that the course of the light vessel was checked in an instant, and she quivered on the water without making a foot's progress. At the same moment the other boat came along side, and also stopped. An officer wearing the imperial uniform stood up and signed to the gondolier as if forbidding him to proceed.

"May I ask, signore, what this means?" demanded the gentleman passenger. "We are in haste."

"And we also," replied the officer. "I am in search of a person called Antonio Tamburini."

"I am he."

"It is well. You will please accompany me."

"That is impossible. I am about to sail for Trieste. We are on our way to the vessel."

"You must return. I have an order for your arrest." And he exhibited an order, signed by the proper authorities, and made out in due form, for the arrest of Antonio Tamburini.

The lady uttered a half shriek, and clung to her husband.

"Here is some mistake, signor. I am the *singer* Tamburini. I have never interfered in politics; I have nothing to do with the government. I am but a chance passenger through Venice."

"My orders are positive," said the officer, with some appearance of impatience. "Make way there;" and while his armed attendants moved so as to allow seats for the prisoners, he offered his hand to the lady to assist her into the other boat.

Our hero was sufficiently vexed at this unexpected delay, but saw that it was inevitable. Offering his arm to his wife, he helped her to change her place, and gave directions for the transfer of his luggage. In a few minutes they were retracing their course across the lagoon.

Not a word was spoken by any of the party, except that once the officer inquired if the lady's seat was commodious. Notwithstanding the silence, however, his manner and that of his men was respectful in the highest degree; and this circumstance somewhat encouraged the hopes of his prisoners that their unpleasant detention might be followed by no serious misfortune. But who could penetrate the mysteries of governmental policy, or the involutions of its suspicion?

Thus it was not without misgivings that Tamburini entered Venice on his compulsory return; and these apprehensions were strengthened when he saw it was not the intention of his guards to conduct him to his late residence. They passed the Palazzo di —; the arcades of San Marco. They were not far from the ancient ducal palace. Thoughts of a prison, of secret denunciations, of unknown accusers, of trial and sentence, were busy in Antonio's brain, and caused him to move uneasily. As for the lady, she was pale as death, and hardly able to support herself upright. The more inexplicable seemed the danger the greater was her dread. Once she leaned towards her husband, and whispered, in a touching tone of distress—"My mother—how will she feel when she knows what has befallen us."

Gentle and generous instinct of woman! Her first thought under the severest pressure of calamity is always for the dear ones whom the blow that crushes her perchance may bruise!

At length the gondola stopped. The moon was shining so brightly, that the marble steps seemed almost to radiate light. There was a hum of voices at a distance, and tones of music at intervals floated on the air; but all was still immediately around them. Two of the guard took their places on either side of the prisoners; two followed; the officer walked before and led the way up a dark flight of steps that terminated in a wide corridor. This, too, was only lighted by a torch carried in the hand of one of the attendants.

"Antonio, whither are we going?" asked Madame Tamburini, in a feeble voice, and leaning heavily on her husband's arm, half fainting with affright.

"Courage, my beloved!" answered he, supporting her with his arm; "we shall soon know the worst."

Crossing the corridor, they entered another long gallery, and walked its whole length in silence, stopping before a massive door at the lower end. The officer directed the door to be opened. It swung on its hinges with a most dungeon-like grating, and the prisoners were ushered into the next apartment.

The sudden light, combined with the effect of overpowering surprise, had nearly completed the work of terror on the lady's trembling frame; she would have fallen to the earth had not the officer supported her. Several persons came crowding round to offer their assistance. Tamburini thought himself fallen into a trance, and rubbed his eyes. They stood in the green-room of the opera house!

This, then, was their dungeon! And what meant this bold invasion of their liberty?—this marching them back as prisoners, under guard, and in fear of their lives? Was it the work of the *Impressario*? Apparently not—for he stood with open eyes and mouth, as much astonished as the rest at the unexpected apparition of the distinguished singer. He turned an inquiring look towards the officer.

"I know what you would ask, Signor Tamburini," replied the cool official, "and will give you all the satisfaction in my power. I have the honour to announce to you the commands of His Majesty the Emperor. It is his imperial will that you perform this night in the Marriage of Figaro. The emperor himself, with His Majesty the Emperor of Russia, will honour the performance with his presence."

Who is there that had the happiness of being present on that memorable occasion, of witnessing the brilliant and graceful performance of Tamburini, that can forget it? The splendours of the scene, the countless number of spectators, comprising the beauty and aristocracy of the most aristocratic of Italian cities, assembled in the presence of two of the most powerful monarchs in Europe; the pomp of royalty; the enthusiasm of a people eager to do homage to genius; the gorgeous decorations of the theatre; the admirable aid of a well-chosen orchestra—all these were but accessions to the triumphs of the young and distinguished artist. It was for him this glorious pageant was devised—he was the power that set in motion this vast machinery! What wonder that human pride failed to withstand a tribute so splendid, and that Tamburini, as he trod the stage, and listened to the bursts of rapturous applause that shook the house like peals of thunder, and knew himself the cynosure of all eyes,—the idol of beauty, nobility and royalty,—felt within his breast an inspiration almost superhuman!

When the opera was over, and he was called out to receive the bravos of the audience, and the wreaths that fell in showers at his feet; when flushed with triumph, yet filled with gratitude, he returned behind the curtain, he was surprised to find himself still a prisoner. The guard was ready to conduct him accompanied by his wife to the lodging assigned them. They were treated, indeed, with courtesy and respect, like prisoners of state; but our hero felt uneasy under the restraint, of which he could obtain no explanation further than "he would know on the morrow."

The next day, a little after noon, Tamburini was conducted to the imperial presence. Surrounded by his court, by foreign nobles and visitors of distinction, the emperor entertained his illustrious guest, the Emperor of Russia, who sat at his right hand. There was silence throughout the courtly assembly when the artist was led in. He made a suitable obeisance when his name was announced, and stood with a respectful air to await the monarch's commands.

"Signor Tamburini," said the Emperor of Austria, "you stand before us a prisoner, and, we understand, plead ignorance as to the cause of your arrest."

"I am, indeed, ignorant, sire," replied the artist, "in what respect I have been so unfortunate as to transgress the laws or offend your majesty."

"We will tell you, then," said the emperor, gravely. "It was your treasonous design to pass through this noble city without stopping to perform at the opera house. Your plan was detected—you were taken in the very act of departure."

"Your majesty—," began the artist.

"Silence, sir; it is in vain to defend yourself. You are proved guilty not only of a conspiracy to defraud our good Venetians of their rights in refusing them the privilege of hearing you, but of *lese majeste* against ourself, and our illustrious

brother, the Emperor of Russia. You lie at our mercy; but you have many friends, and at their intercession we remit you other punishment than a few days' imprisonment. Meanwhile, we have ordered a sum to be paid you, in testimony of our approval of your last night's performance; and in addition, ask of us any favour you choose."

"Sire, my gratitude—your gracious condescension——"

Tamburini's voice faltered from emotion.

"Your boon, if you please!" cried the emperor, impatiently.

"Sire, it is simply this—permission to keep my word, pledged to my friends at Trieste, who are expecting me."

There was a murmur of surprise among the spectators. The monarch, after a pause, replied, with a gracious smile—

"You are a noble fellow, Tamburini, and your request shall be granted. Only to-night we must have you in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. We are told you are inimitable in that last adagio. And now, come nearer."

The artist knelt at the monarch's feet.

"Receive from our hands this medal *di nostro Salvatore*,"* and the emperor flung the chain around his neck. "Learn thus how much we love to do honour to genius."

Thus loaded with distinction, the artist was presented to the Russian emperor, and received the compliments and congratulations of the nobility present. He was destined ere long to receive in other lands honours almost equal to those bestowed in his own; and to show how boundless and how absolute is the dominion Heaven has given the true artist over the human heart.

* Wellington was the only foreigner who had received this compliment previously to Tamburini.

THE FAIR CLIENT.

BY MRS. S. C. HALL.

"I TELL you once more," said Frank Morton to his pretty cousin Dora Leslie—"Mrs. Leslie," indeed, she ought to be written, for she was not only a wife but a widow—"I tell you once more, you might as well talk to a stick or a stone about justice or mercy, as to old Fred Linch. A stick or a stone,"—he repeated,—“better—better ten times talk to *them* on the subject than to *him*, for they wear no semblance of humanity. You expect nothing from stones and sticks—and—"

"I beg your pardon, Frank," interrupted the pretty widow, "I expect the stick you are twirling about so vehemently will break my looking-glass."

"Psha!" exclaimed the young man; "you may expect that—but what *can* you expect from a pettifogging attorney?"

"A great deal, Frank—an amount of costs—a multiplication of falsehood—a perversion of truth—a perplexing of facts—a discoloration of objects—ruin as the result—an ignorance as to common honesty—a proficiency in dishonesty—in short, a combination of evil which no other human being could gather together—by which *he* lives and *we* die. You have only to tell me that a man is a pettifogger, and I vanish; and as to old Linch, in addition to his bearing the plague-spot of his 'profession,' forsooth, about with him, smelling of parchments, of looking latitats, he is old and ugly; so spare your invectives, Frank, abridge your censure, and just tell me what I can do in the matter—paint law in soot, and shall I swear it to be snow?"

"Upon my word, I believe I had better leave it to you, my dear Dora, to paint it—your colours will not be over delicate, nor your sketch *couteur de rose*. What in the world has made you so bitter against the men of law?"

"Psha!" she replied, laughing; "don't you know? 'A suit in chancery' bequeathed me by my grandfather, and another in 'the Pleas,' besides the disputed 'will cause.'"

"But you triumphed in the two last, and surely there is a prospect of the chancery suit being brought to a conclusion."

"As to the triumph," replied Dora, "the triumph simply was, that my lawyers were greater rogues than those employed by my adversary, and so—I triumphed! I have not the least objection to continue the chancery suit; I really think it contributes to keep me in health—it gives me excitement, something to think of and to do; something to vent my spleen upon when I am splenetic, and my laughter when I am mischievous. But you are not so easily circumstanced. You, my

dear Frank, are of a peace-loving, gentle nature, and so seek peace, even with law—nay, I think you would go a little farther, and expect—love!"

"Really, Dora, you are too provoking," answered her cousin, while his cheek flushed and his eyes sparkled. "You know it is a matter of life and death with me; you know that I love his niece with my whole soul; you know that by the terms of her father's will, she cannot marry before she is of age without having her uncle's consent—for if she does she forfeits her inheritance, and she is now only——"

"Nineteen," said Mrs. Leslie.

"No, Dora, only eighteen and three months," replied the lover.

"What a wicked thing of fathers to prevent their daughters becoming the prey of mercenary spendthrifts," observed the lady, jerking off her netting stirrup and rolling it up with great deliberation.

"You know I am not mercenary; nor am I a spendthrift," he answered, seriously.

"You look sharply after your fair one's fortune, at all events," persisted Mrs. Leslie.

"My own means would not give to Anna the luxuries or even the comforts she has been accustomed to," said Frank Morton, still more seriously. "And I should, indeed, feel ashamed of myself if I induced a young and affectionate girl to abandon her birth-right and embrace comparative poverty for my gratification. No—if her uncle persists in refusing his consent, I have made up my mind to wait until she is of age—three years and nine months!—three centuries of a lover's life. I shall be an old man by that time."

"Nearly eight-and-twenty!" laughed his cousin; "and Anna an old woman."

"Besides, there is no knowing what may happen between this and then."

"Very true—you may fall in love with some one else—nay, with half a dozen."

"Impossible—quite—quite impossible," replied the lover, fervently.

"Ah, Frank," said his cousin, with one of her most mischievous looks, "so you told me about twelve years ago, under the cherry tree at Burnewood. You were a great, lubberly boy, a week escaped from a jacket, high shoes and nankeens, and I just going to be married, and my head divided between love of my *trousseau* and love of poor, dear Leslie. You said then, while the tears ran down—a-down your fat cheeks, that you were miserable, and should never love any one but your Cousin Dora; and you wrote some verses comparing my heart to a black-heart cherry. I think

I have them somewhere, and will show them to Anna as a specimen of your constancy. You are certainly greatly improved since then."

"I am sorry I cannot return the compliment," said Mr. Morton, bowing; "and as you only seem inclined to laugh at what I fancied you might have sympathized with, I will wish you good morning."

"Nay, cousin," exclaimed Mrs. Leslie, "I did but jest. I thought you knew me too well to mind my jesting. There—I will not tell Anna, lest she should be jealous of the first love-fancy of a boy of fourteen for his cousin of four-and-twenty—twelve years ago to boot! But this Linch—this grit of granite in the wheel of love, this hunks, this sweep-faced, hard-hearted curmudgeon—how shall I manage him?"

"He knows you very well. If you were only to go and tell him how much we love each other."

"You mean Anna and you, I suppose?" said Mrs. Leslie, unable to conquer her desire for jesting.

"To be sure I do," he replied. "Just tell him how devoted we are to each other."

"No—that he would not care for."

"How respectably I am connected."

"That is nothing to him."

"How happy we should be."

"Destruction at once to your suit. Those who are not happy themselves never promote the happiness of others."

"Well, then, how grateful we should be."

"Gratitude bears no per centage. *That* won't do."

"I am sure I do not know what to say, Dora," answered her cousin, who was any thing but fruitful in expedients. "He can make us happy, if he will, at once—if not, we will wait, and, when the time comes, be happy in spite of him."

"You throw me completely on my own resources," said the widow; "but the first step is for me to become *his client*."

"A fair client, most certainly," answered her cousin. "But you have no law-suit at present. You would not surely turn your chancery business over to his hands?"

"No—certainly not."

"But you are not engaged in any law-suit?" persisted Frank.

"No; but I may be if I like, I suppose, cousin mine. We manufacture our own misery, why not our own law?"

"But I confess I do not see what that has to do with my marrying his niece."

"I do," she replied; and wishing her perplexed cousin good-morning, the lady withdrew—returning the next moment to add—"Now keep up your spirits, Frank; do not do any thing desperate; do not even take an over dose of champagne. I remember when your love for me took a despairing turn—you, boy-like, *eat it off*. Your mother declared you spent a fortune in cheese-cakes. I feared you might, in a spirit of manliness, endeavour to *drink* this off. But do not, Frank; rely upon me—I will put every thing *en train* before the sun

sets." And again she vanished, leaving Frank Morton half offended, half amused, and most anxious as to the result—comforted, nevertheless, because he believed in the contrivance and spirit of Mrs. Leslie.

There are a great many amiable, gentle-hearted men, who get through life to their own credit and the comfort of others by the aid of a fortune which places them beyond the necessity for thought or exertion; but if any event occurs, any obstacle is discovered which cannot be at once overcome—in which something more than money or connection is requisite; where tact is even more necessary than talent—it is in vain they turn to their banker's book or seek precedents for conduct in a like extremity. They are utterly at sea, dashed from one billow to another, helpless as infants, and very apt to consider themselves placed under circumstances of strait and difficulty in which no one was ever placed before. Poor Frank Morton was perfectly amiable and gentle-hearted, and *ought* to have been raised above the necessity for exerting his wits—for certainly his wits never would have exalted him. He once considered "Cousin Dora" the most lovely creature in the world, and only changed his opinion to believe her the most astonishing; and like those who never manufactured a project or have what may be considered a genuine idea of their own, was perpetually wondering "how such odd things could come into Cousin Dora's head;" frequently indulged in reveries as to "how she came to be so clever;" could not devise "what her brain was made of;" wished he "knew the world but half as well," and so forth; and then remained content with wishing, satisfied in his own mind that, do what he would, he should never have the head of Dora Leslie. In truth, the widow had run away with the ready wit and invention of the whole family, and in return was always willing to exercise it for their benefit and her own amusement; besides, she really loved Frank as a brother, and desired his happiness with more earnestness than she usually bestowed upon any single object or person. A woman is always interested in the fate of a cidevant lover, particularly if she understands human nature sufficiently not to be displeased at a man's forgetting a first love in a second, a third, a fourth, or even a fifth! She could not have forgiven a mere coquette—but Frank, poor fellow, was quite in earnest with the sentiment as long as it lasted, and this made her esteem him far above the love-seeming men of fashion, who never feel, or if they do, whose feeling is affectation. She thought that a union with Anna would make him happy, that money is always an advantage in a family, and she most particularly desired to set her wit against what she called "English Linch law."

Mrs. Leslie drove up to Mr. Linch's office in her carriage, and having learned that he was at home, she took sundry letters and a parchment or two tied with the "professional red tape" from her servant's hands, and entered his sanctum. Nothing could be more unpromising than the opening

of the campaign. It was evident that the old man expected she came to press her cousin's suit; and upon every wrinkle of his face was written "denial." His mouth drawn into a hooting "No," his brow contracted, his feet firmly set upon the ground, his hands rigid to the very tips of his fingers, he looked as if steeped in the very essence of perverseness; and not even when his fair client commenced explaining the business upon which she came, did he change; nor was the change sudden, despite her desire to draw him away from his suspicions. He seemed to consider her the embodiment of a proposal for his niece and her money, and she had gone a long way with her "statement" before he forgot the uncle in the attorney, and at last became oblivious to all considerations, save the prospect of a "suit at law." Slowly the muscles of his mouth relaxed; his features fell into their usual places; his monosyllables extended into penetrating inquiries—every expression was set on the keen, cutting, investigating edge of the law. He rubbed his hands in perfect ecstasy when Mrs. Leslie pointed out what, if not weak points in her adversary's cause, might, by the usual inverted proceedings of a "good man of business," be turned into such; and absolutely pressed her arm with his vulture-like fingers, when he assured her that nothing was needed but to bring the cause into court. She felt as if her wrist was encircled by a viper; but she remembered her cousin, and her desire to free Anna from the domination of such a master increased tenfold.

It was at once evident to Mr. Linch, that if what his fair client stated was true, she would be entitled to a vast addition to her income. As the very anticipation of such an event trebled his respect, she became—his "dear lady;" and this feeling rapidly increased when she entreated him to keep their interview a profound secret, particularly from certain members of the profession whom she named, stating that she should leave the entire conduct of the suit in his hands without further anxiety. She managed the interview with the skill and the grace of an accomplished actress; and the shrewd attorney accepted an invitation to dine with her the next day. Of course, Frank was not of the party; and the idea that Master Linch turned over and over in his mind as he plunged his receding chin into his red comforter and journeyed homeward, was—"I wonder how she came to think me honest? I never was thought honest before! She certainly thinks me very honest," and he nestled his chin still more deeply in the warm red wool, and chuckled like a fiend over the prospect of pillaging the fool who could think him "honest." He let himself into his hall with his own latch key, and struck a light; but he had strange dreams that night, and more than once the bright eyes of the fair widow flashed across his slumbers, and he felt as if struck by lightning; and then he thought that strange reports had gone abroad concerning him—that rogues considered him "honest," and honest men called him "rogue;" and that he lost all his practice, scouted alike by both.

Frank became desperately impatient. An entire week had passed, (a year of a lover's life,) and to all his inquiries the widow replied with badinage and laughter. Her intimacy with Mr. Linch grew into a nine days' wonder. On the tenth day, the miser made a feast, and she dined with him. Again he dined with her, and the next morning the fair and faithless client presented Frank with Mr. Linch's written permission for his marriage with his (Mr. Linch's) niece. The following day it was determined that the lawyer and his niece, Frank Morton and a few select friends, were to form a reunion round the widow's hospitable board. Mrs. Leslie would answer no questions; she confided the secret of her influence to the most faithful of all counsellors—herself; and received Mr. Linch with a *graciousness*—if the expression be permitted—peculiarly her own. A most strange change had passed over the attorney's outward man. But for the twinkling of his cold, gray eyes, that glittered like stars in frosty weather, and the croaking of his hard voice, you would have scarcely recognized him as the brown-coated, shriveled dweller of the inns of court. His features had expanded; he was dressed by a skilful tailor, and his wig might have been envied by the royal wig fancier of past days. The incorrigible widow leaned almost lovingly upon his arm; and after dinner, when she withdrew, consigned her table to his care. Frank could not make it out; but that was not much to be wondered at—he had not what people call a "discovering mind." Anna was almost as mystified as Frank; but women, if they do not understand at once, are given to regard each other rather through a microscope than a telescope, not drawing the object much closer, but getting at its exaggeration. And little, gentle Anna, who knew nothing of the world, thought she could see through the veil of the woman of the world. Quiet little Anna, much as she had suffered, she did not like her uncle's being made such a fool of. Her eyes filled with tears more than once when she noted the arch looks of her lover's cousin, and heard the half-murmured derision that trembled on her lip. When she spoke to her of her nearest living relative, she owed him neither love nor kindness, and when Frank was present, she was too happy to moralize; but still, she thought that he was an old man; and when her father lived, and she was a little child, she had often sat upon his knee, while he cut her soldiers out of old parchments. She remembered he was kind to her then—never since, certainly; but then he was, and she dwelt upon that, forgetting his unkindness until the harsh tones of his grating voice, or the coldness of his eyes when they looked on her, forced her to remember how much that is harsh and cruel can be forced into a few short years.

It was evident to Frank Morton that his cousin was wearying of the toils she herself had woven. The novelty of her position bewitching what she loathed; the metamorphosis that witchery had wrought on the old man; the necessity for bringing

the matter to a speedy termination, rendered her more restless, more capricious, more teasing and tormenting than usual; and when she withdrew her cousin into one of those shut-up sort of obscurities, half room, half closet, which ladies in their fantasy drape in pink calico and coarse muslin, and then pronounce it a boudoir, he thought the spell would have been broken, the mystery explained to his entire satisfaction—but he was quite at fault.

"Frank," said Mrs. Leslie, "you must manage to marry Anna within a week—within three days, in fact. I am tired to death of Linch, and want to get to Brighton. He may revoke, so get married at once, and then you have his consent to plead; but it must be within three days. It was vastly amusing at first, but I cannot keep it up. I must avoid seeing him again until the knot is tied."

Mrs. Leslie yawned, and remained silent. Frank took her advice, and pleaded his cause—the cause of both—so successfully with Anna, that the ceremony was performed, and confessed, a few hours afterwards, on bended knee to the lady's uncle. Mr. Linch was very angry. His fair client had not received his visits or replied to his notes during the last two or three days; and, determined to be both heard and seen, he almost forced his way into the little pink boudoir. She held out one hand to greet him, and covered her face with the other in a half-coquettish sort of way, as if ashamed of her "naughtiness."

"I knew you would forgive them," she said. "And after all, it could not make much difference to you, for they would have waited; and you only lose the turning of the money for three years."

The old man shuddered at the loss, but endeavoured to turn it off with a complimentary phrase or two, that came out very slowly. He evidently determined to avoid that subject, but cling to the other, and rushed into the intricacies of the projected suit at law with as much zeal and activity as if it had been the opportunity of his life for legal distinction.

"He had," he said, "taken counsel's opinion upon the statement she committed to his care, preserving the secrecy she had enjoined as to name, and avoiding those in the profession whom she had desired him to avoid. From all that passed, he felt assured that in a short time he should have to congratulate her on a splendid addition to her income; and he hoped she would remember the gratitude which she said must be felt towards him who had the good fortune to advise and direct her proceedings."

The speech was set and clear enough, but the positive faltering of the old man's voice, the memory of a blush—of a purple tone, certainly, but still a blush—that overspread his features, and the earnestness of his last words, would have led to the belief that Cupid had really been at his pranks, and added another to his list of ancient fools—hard, world grubbing, musty fools, surprised into a feeling whose very existence they had disbelieved for

three-score years, and which revenged itself by pranking the withered tree in the mocking garlands of sunny May.

It really was something to make Mrs. Leslie feel embarrassed; something to see her pause for a reply; something to perceive that perplexity was as new to her as was love to Mr. Linch; and for once that to her capricious nature novelty failed to be delightful. At last she said—

"I hope, my good sir, you will forgive the little jest I ventured to practise upon you, just for the purpose of making those young people happy. I told you I had a suit at common law, and a disputed will cause, and you were so good as to feel greatly interested therein. You saw at once how just my causes were."

"Certainly, certainly," repeated Mr. Linch.

"The documents I showed you were the documents that accompanied my suits into court. Upon them I received my verdicts, and I have the satisfaction of seeing that you quite agreed with what has been done. The fortune you promised me *I have enjoyed these ten years!* I sought to interest you in my own affairs that you might—in short, that you might take pity upon your niece, or rather, I should say, *render her justice!* Frank's eloquence and her tears had alike failed to produce the desired effect, and I sought to gain a temporary influence over you by the temptation of a double law-suit."

Mr. Linch trembled from head to foot. At last he exclaimed—

"Worse than that, madam, worse than that. There was another temptation you did not disdain to hold out—the possession of that hand, madam; of that hand, upon which, the very last time I saw you, *I counted eleven rings, and all of value.*"

The widow could not resist this climax. She laughed mightily, and became quite herself when the old gentleman threatened to sue her for breach of promise of marriage. Instead of endeavouring to dissuade him from it or showing its absurdity, she did all she could to urge him to bring the action immediately. "I really," she said, "did not think you were half so great a darling as you are. If you will do so at once, I will put off my journey to Brighton. It would be a fresh celebrity, a renewal of my youth;—and then the evidence, and the cause of my hoaxing you—so romantic! And you pleading the excess of your tender passion for me, to the positive loss of the use of Anna's fortune for three years, and being induced to give your consent in exchange for the pickings of two law-suits. Only fancy!"

But Mr. Linch did not bring an action—he did not even charge the widow with the fee he had paid for counsel's opinion. He abandoned his new finery, resumed his old suit, withdrew his forgiveness from his niece, and registered a vow in Westminster Hall to have nothing more to do with FAIR CLIENTS!

THE THREE BREAKFASTS.

BY WILLIAM E. BURTON.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

TRIN. COLL. CAM.—THE FRESHMAN'S SPREAD.

"How are you, men? Mr. Jennings, from London. Jennings, let me make you acquainted with Wilson, of John's, and Kemp, of King's—you've met Edwards before—Edwards of Pembroke?"

The new comers were ushered into a dirty-looking room, up two flights of stairs, in the inner quadrangle of Trinity College, Cambridge. A cloud of tobacco smoke hung over a large table, which was surrounded by about fifteen young men, *in statu pupillari*, and covered with as profuse a variety of edibles and bibbles as the most perfect gourmand could desire. The affair was called a breakfast, but had the usual ceremonies been observed, it would have formed a very respectable dinner. Hudson, the experienced caterer of Trinity, had received orders for "a proper spread," and a metropolitan provider would have been proud of the display. Fish, fresh from the coast; game of the rarest quality, the choicest morceaux of the French *carte*, with a befitting sprinkle of the solids, were washed down by indiscriminate draughts of bottled porter, champagne, Edinburgh ale, the most delicate Rudesheim, and the thick and tawny port. Tea and coffee were seldom asked for, unless the inquirer felt the potency of his quaffings—then a cup of strong green tea or a bowl of Mocha, without milk and of a strength that laughed the Paris article to scorn, was applied medicinally, and generally with the wished success. The college *copus*, a bewitching mixture of wine, ale, spice and sugar, incessantly circled the group, in an antique silver vase that held a gallon, from which each person drank in rotation, and then handed it to his neighbour. The *cup* was never allowed to stand still. Ceremony was banished from the room; the gyps, or college waiters, attended to the demands of the guests, and handed a cigar or a pheasant poult, a rumpsteak or an ortolan, pine-apple or London porter, pigeon pie, *cuisse de poulet sauté aux champignons*, or cold corned beef, with equal readiness and good will.

"Jennings, much obliged for your invite," said one of the new comers to the host, with the easy air of an old acquaintance. "Your friend St. Vau cleaned me out last night, by his superior intimacy with the four kings. We did not part till old Sol was kissing Aurora; and, after a four hours' tumble in the downy, I wanted something spicy as a revivifier. Birch, put the maraschino in motion; this coffee requires a *chasse*."

Jennings, the "freshman," or newly-arrived student, looked at the gentleman on his right who had done the honours of introduction, and said, with a meaning glance—

"I regret to hear that you are a gambler."

St. Vau blushed to the eyes. A pause followed the remark, which was broken by a titter that gradually thickened into a general and boisterous laugh.

"How extremely verdant," said Kemp.

"The veritable *cochlearum magnum* from Gurr's," said an initiating professor of pharmacy, who had come to college to get Latin enough to label his drawers.

"Gambling is a phrase never applied by men of the world to the private amusements of gentlemen," said St. Vau. "In this university, the most erudite scholars occasionally relax from their severer studies, and disseminate the pasteboard, poise the cue, or rattle the ivory. The abstract contemplativeness of a good whist-player is peculiarly adapted to the formation of a metaphysical state of mind; the 'throws' of a pair of dice are integral portions of sexagesimals, and, therefore, logistic, if not logical in effect; and many a brilliant problem has been mathematically solved whilst watching the angles described by a billiard ball upon its green baize plane. In fact, the big wigs recommend a quiet 'pool' to all young beginners; and the Cherterton bridge, on the road to the billiard tables, is the *pons asinorum* of all new comers."

The freshman looked mystified, and another titter went round.

"Let's induct our new friend," said Wilson.

"The classicalities of a little chicken hazard will give him an idea of the thing at once."

"What say you, Jennings," inquired St. Vau;

"shall we now commence our course of studies in that line? You must come into the thing some time or another, and the present moment is peculiarly auspicious."

"I never gamble—I beg pardon, you dislike the phrase—I never play at games of chance for money," said Jennings.

"Oh, we'll make the game light to suit you, as you're a new beginner—just enough to render it barely interesting."

The freshman continued firm in his refusal.

"Confound it, man," said St. Vau, rising with some appearance of anger, "you must succumb to the customs of the place. A flirt of the four aces regularly follows a feed amongst the *varmint* men of the university; and I suppose, as a new comer, you do not presume to remodel the manners of the collegians?"

"Certainly not," said Wilson. "Mr. Jennings is bashful amongst his new friends, and has not yet imbibed enough wine to conquer his old feelings. Let the gyps arrange a pair of card tables in the inner room, whilst we join Mr. J. in a bumper of champagne."

A clamour of assent from a majority of the visitors overpowered the freshman's objections, and he arose from the table and turned towards the window to conceal his chagrin. He was presently joined by a young man whose acquaintance he had formed on the previous day in the library of old Trinity, and whose presence he had solicited at his first "spread," being the only personal invitation he had made, having left the choice of visitors to St. Vau. Mr. Harrington was "a third-year man," distinguished by his literary attainments and close attention to the duties of the university. He enjoyed the confidence of "the heads of the houses," but was not on speaking terms with more than one or two of the sporting set engaged in discussing Jennings' champagne.

"Mr. Harrington," said the freshman, "must I submit to this violence? I am opposed to gambling upon principle. I am unused to these scenes of debauch. What will my father, who is a clergyman, say when he hears of this frightful scene—here, in my apartments, and within a week of my arrival at the university?"

"How long have you known St. Vau, Wilson and Kemp?" inquired Harrington.

"I brought a letter to St. Vau from the keeper of the hotel where I sojourned during my recent visit to London. I was glad of an introduction to any one, for I dreaded the sight of so many strange faces. He, St. Vau, introduced the others to me, but I cannot say I like their manners. Surely, surely, Mr. Harrington, such persons are not to be considered fair specimens of the university men?"

"You have assembled around you every known vagabond in the place. The names of the majority of your guests are familiar in the mouths of the barmen of the Cam, the Barnwell impures, and the proctors' bull dogs; but I doubt if any one of the party could obtain credit for a dinner with the easiest landlord in the town. The report of your association with them will tell sadly to your prejudice. Who made out the list of invitations?"

"St. Vau. He offered to introduce me to some of the best men in the university; advised me to ask *three or four* to breakfast; undertook the selection of the guests and the ordering of the meal. I neither expected such a numerous party, nor intended incurring such an enormous expense, so perfectly incompatible with my limited allowance. Who is this St. Vau?"

"An adventurer—without means. He is said to be of foreign extraction, but no one knows his family. He was 'plucked' at Oxford, has been 'rusticated' here for repeated improprieties, and his next freak will doubtless be visited by expulsion."

A bacchanalian song, with a loud and vulgar chorus, disturbed the talkers. During the song,

the gyp, who had been sent in search of the cards, arrived with a couple of packs and placed them on the tables in the inner room. Wilson approached the host with a brimmer of Mousseau in each hand.

"The pleasure of a glass of wine with you, Jennings?"

The freshman declined *the pleasure* with a contemptuous bow, and walked to the side of the card table, where St. Vau stood, flirting the edges of one of the opened packs.

"What shall it be, men?—a round game at one table, and a little innocent whist, guinea points, at the other? Or shall we conglomerate round one centre, and illumine ourselves with the brightness of the classic pharo?"

Whilst yet a few of the party continued to peal forth the *refrain* of the noisy song, the majority yelled a drunken answer to the chief instigator, and crowded round the table whereat he stood, yelling for their favourite games. Jennings placed his hand upon St. Vau's shoulder, and said—

"My wishes seem to be of little worth, Mr. St. Vau, even in mine own apartment; but I beg you to remember that the ordinances of the university expressly prohibit card playing, and as a new comer, I cannot allow the rule to be broken in my presence."

The most timid and the most sober stood aghast at this bold interference; but a drunkard's laugh gave an example to the rest, and a volley of groans and jeers was presently fired at the unlucky freshman.

"My dear fellow," said St. Vau, "you mistake your position. You have nothing to do with it *now*. You empowered me to invite these gentlemen to your rooms—I did so; I am, therefore, answerable to them for their amusement, and to you for their conduct. *PLAY* we most certainly shall. Join us in the game if you like—it is a noun you may decline, but *dare not* misconstrue."

"The guests of Mr. Jennings will pardon me," said Mr. Harrington, "if I am heteroclit in my opinion, and affirm that he is right. As members, we are bound to respect the laws of the university; as gentlemen, we are bound to attend to the wishes of our host; as men—but I see by the sneers of those about me that I am not understood. To prevent mistakes, and secure the observance of my friend's desires, I shall pocket these packs of cards, and retain possession till I deposit them in the hands of the dean. Should any gentleman desire his name to be furnished to the authorities, with the particulars of this meeting, he has but to oppose my intentions, and he may depend upon the execution of his wish."

St. Vau alone stood unabashed. With a profusion of curses and vulgar epithets, he confronted Harrington, and dared him to a personal encounter. The gentleman turned from the blackguard with contempt. Seizing a heavy cut-glass decanter, which one of his friends had just placed on the card-table, St. Vau swung it aloft with the deter-

mination of hurling it at the head of his antagonist. But the freshman seized his arm just as the missile was dispatched upon its murderous errand. The jerk caused an alteration in its course, and Jennings observed, with small regret, that the pander Wilson dropped senseless on the floor.

Harrington smiled, and bowing to Jennings, moved towards the door. St. Vau, galled to madness, rushed past every obstacle, and grappled the retiring scholar. Whether the excess of rage weakened his powers, or the bodily strength of Harrington was actually pre-eminent, it were vain to judge, but after the struggle of an instant, St. Vau was dashed against the opposite wall. Bowing coolly to the party, the champion of the host quietly withdrew.

The freshman found himself most unpleasantly situated in the midst of his infuriated and drunken guests. Wilson, with a broken head, sat in one corner of the room, growling a diabolical revenge on all concerned, and roaring for a doctor and a glass of punch with an energy that bespoke the attention of all who were sober enough to serve him. St. Vau, bruised in body and conquered in spirit, plotted retaliation in mysterious whispers. It was soon evident, by the movements of the parties, that challenges were to be sent to the offender Harrington, both by Wilson and the redoubtable St. Vau.

Kemp undertook the delivery of the hostile messages, and departed on his errand. Wilson howled a drunken defiance at the freshman, but St. Vau, who foresaw the innumerable advantages derivable from the acquaintance of the new comer, succeeded in quieting the brawl. Despite Jennings' earnest remonstrance, a fresh supply of punch and cigars was ordered in; and broiled bones, deviled kidneys and other stimulants were placed upon the table. The furious insanity of drunkenness rapidly spread its influence over the majority of the drinkers. Unmeaning oaths, ribaldry in its most offensive guise, shouts and maniac laughter broke the silence of the night, which was advancing rapidly towards "the wee sma' hours," such had been the protracted nature of this college breakfast.

Harrington's threat of information to the dean was meant to scare the ruffians who acknowledged no other authority. His generous nature scorned to act the tell-tale or the spy; but his words gave the freshman an idea, which, in his circumstances, he was perfectly justifiable in carrying into effect. He had writhed, for hours after his friend's departure, under the infliction imposed upon him by the impudence of his guests, and had vainly endeavoured to leave the rooms to their full possession. He was detained per force, until a new supply of liquids was demanded, when he was allowed to communicate with the gyp in the little antichamber which shut-in his apartments from the common stair.

"Now, fellow," said Jennings, seizing the servant by the arm, and rapidly descending the stairway, "show me to the dean's rooms, and I'll give

you half a guinea. Refuse, or alarm those riotous students, and I'll break every bone in your body."

The gyp earned the money, wisely considering that the freshman could otherwise obtain the required intelligence of the porter at the college gate, and that a refusal would bring the ban of the university upon his name, involving the certain loss of an excellent means of living. In ten minutes, the dean, with one of the proctors and several assistants, followed the freshman to the door of his chambers; and the scene that met the gaze of the officials made the matter sufficiently clear without the aid of Mr. Jennings' representations.

Wilson, with a bloody napkin twined around his head, sat, senselessly drunk, near the door. To aid the effect of his sanguinary turban, a pair of ferocious mustachios had been made with burnt cork on his pallid cheeks, and a lighted wax candle placed in his open mouth. As many of the carousers as could stand, were doing the honours to the health of a lady who resided down the road; others were exhibiting their dexterity as marksmen by throwing tumblers, tea-cups, and other available missiles at various little busts in bronze, which graced the top of the freshman's book case. One of the card tables had been dragged from the inner room, and a graduate who had not spoken a word from the moment of his introduction to the present time, was vigorously dancing a sailor's hornpipe on the confined superficies of the table, to the infinite diversion of several of his compeers. Three bottles of south-side Madeira had been poured into a tea-kettle and placed upon the fire, for the purpose of making some "screeching hot" Regent's punch; the wine was boiling over, and intermittent explosions of steam and alcoholic blazings of singular beauty added a zest to the scene which the guests seemed incapable of appreciating, although the new comers regarded the exhibition with marvellous wonder and dismay.

The "breakfast" was broken up by the strong arm of authority, just at the time, as Kemp stated, when the guests were beginning to enjoy themselves. The whole affair underwent a rigorous investigation. St. Vau was expelled the university, Wilson and Kemp were rusticated for the whole of the ensuing term, and Mr. Jennings cautioned as to the choice of his future acquaintances.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

CAFE TURC, A PARIS.—LA DEJEUNER A LA FOURCHETTE.

JAMES HARRINGTON obtained his degree "with honours," and relying on the promise of an ad- vee to a rich benefice in the north of England, resolved to continue his academical course. To his regret, he was suddenly called to London by his friends, and proposals made to him by his uncle, a rich importer, respecting a partnership in their

old established firm. The conditions were highly favourable, but he was required to reside in Paris, as the foreign representative of the house.

A few months after his arrival in the French metropolis, I formed Harrington's acquaintance, and received from his own lips the account of his adventures at Cambridge. He was a single-minded man, thinking for himself on all occasions—slow in his determinations, but prompt when once resolved. The approval of his own conscience was the only reward he estimated. Dwelling in the midst of the most violent prejudices,—for, to this day, the English and the French indulge in stronger prejudices against each other than any other members of the human family,—he was singularly respected by all classes, and was, in fact, an especial favourite in the best circles of Parisian society. M. de Robichon, the manufactory agent for the firm, and the principal of the silk factory with which Harrington was chiefly connected, was devotedly attached to his young friend; and the esteem seemed perfectly reciprocal, inasmuch as Harrington passed every leisure hour at the dwelling of the agent, while Luc de Robichon, the son, and Guillelmine, the daughter, were the chosen partners of his private hours.

"Yes, my friend," said Harrington, one day, during a pleasant stroll along the Boulevard des Italiens, "I am about to unite myself to the beautiful Mademoiselle de Robichon. I am tired of the dull, insensate routine of bachelorship, and Guillelmine's devotion as a daughter is a warranty of her affection as a wife. She is young, very young; but the French ladies are more precocious than the English. She is somewhat thoughtless, I confess, which accounts for a giddiness and flippancy of manner; but her ductile temper and evident attachment to my unworthy self, render the certainty of her improvement under my guidance a work of delightful ease and most grateful reward."

The wedding took place, and I was introduced to the bride. I found her even more childish and *écervelé* than her lover's description had induced me to expect. She was strangely beautiful. Her large, roving eyes possessed a power that seemed akin to witchcraft, so fascinating were her glances; while the warm play of her mobile features, her ripe, plump lips, and rich round bust, teeming with the soft languor of voluptuousness, seemed to impregnate the very atmosphere with love. Her mouth was perfect—language cannot depict its beauty; but the inanity of her conversation marred the effect of her charms, and made us wonder at the poor etherealism which occupied so heavenly a domicile.

From the English ambassador's, where the marriage took place, at an early hour, according to the good old custom, the party proceeded to the Café Turc, to partake of a substantial breakfast given by the bride's father, previous to the departure of the happy pair to a hunting chateau, belonging to the family, on the banks of the Marne, in the vicinity of Fontainebleau. We were strolling beneath

the beautiful trees in front of the café, while breakfast was being served, when Luc de Robichon, the bride's brother, was seen coming through the colonnade of the building, with a well-dressed, good-looking young man upon his arm. Harrington stopped short in his promenade as they approached, and the bride uttered an exclamation of delight.

"Allow me the pleasure of introducing my most intimate friend, Gustave St. Vau. My brother-in-law, James Harrington. St. Vau is so extremely familiar with our domestic circle, that I have made bold to bring him to this our wedding feast without a previous acquaintance, and look to you to receive him as one of us."

Harrington gaped in mute surprise. It was, indeed, the disreputable ex-member of Trinity who stood before him.

"Why, Harrington, old boy, how goes it? You remember your college chum, St. Vau—*then*, a giddy and somewhat dissipated youth, but *now*, a steady business man like yourself. And so, you are the chosen husband of my blooming belle and whilomsweetheart, the merry Guillelmine? 'Twere useless to wish you joy, when you possess such happiness in reality. Come, let us in; breakfast is ready, and I long to drink the bride's health in a bumper of Clicquot."

With the nonchalant air of an old acquaintance, he nodded to Harrington, offered his arm to the new-made wife, and trotted her off to the café with the strut of a master of ceremonies leading the belle of the evening to her position at some country ball. Harrington gazed at this piece of impertinence with bloodless cheeks and stifled breath; but his brother-in-law recalled his self-possession by desiring him to excuse the exuberance of their old playmate St. Vau, who had known his sister from her cradle.

The breakfast passed merrily enough, although the bridegroom's seat was occupied by the presumptuous intruder, who paid unceasing attention to the bride, and did the honours of the table as though he were the donor of the feast. The bride received his flatteries with a gracious smile; her relatives echoed his boastful laugh, and with ready subservience, plauded his self-sufficient jests. The guests caught the humour of the family; and St. Vau became the lord of the ascendant—"the great, the gifted, and the good." The bridegroom exchanged glances with me—glances of direful import—and I momentarily expected an outbreak, warranted on his side by the extraordinary conduct of his chosen one and her impudent acquaintance.

"Bumpers, gentlemen," said St. Vau, rising with a creaming beaker of Sillery in his grasp, "bumpers to the happiness of the married pair. I have known them both for some length of time, and can speak to their deserts. The lady"—and with a conceited air he raised the bride's hand to his lips—"has long been the object of my severest adoration; and although now compelled to resign her to the superior merits of my college friend, who has most successfully employed the period of my recent absence, I bear him no malice—on the

contrary, it will give me unspeakable delight to see his manly brow bedecked with every honour that the marriage state can bestow."

Harrington rose in haste, and the tempest seemed about to burst, when a sudden outcry in the courtyard attracted general attention. The majority of the guests hastened to the windows; some of them hurried to the stairs; and M. de Robichon and an officious uncle of exceeding corpulency, seized the bridegroom by the arm, and hurried him from the room, under the pretence of inquiring into the cause of the noise below.

The uproar continued; voices were heard in loud authoritative tones, and the clash of arms resounded through the house. The guests hastened to the scene of strife, and I was left with the bride and the ex-collegian, whose whispered sentences seemed of sufficient importance to attract her undivided attention. I felt that I was *de trop*, but I also felt that leaving them together would be more imprudent than my intrusion could be deemed impertinent. Presently, I heard my name called loudly, and I recognized the voice of my friend Harrington. I hesitated on my course, but his frequent appeals placed me without resource. I left the room, and was on the point of descending the main staircase of the café, when I remembered that I had deposited a small riding whip, the gift of a valued friend, in the corner of the room I had just quitted. I returned, and pushing open the unfastened door, discovered St. Vau with his lips glued to the face of the bride, whose arms were flung around his neck as she returned his basal embrace.

I quitted the apartment unperceived, and gained the entrance lobby of the café, where Harrington awaited my descent.

"Have you pistols or swords at hand?" said he, as he seized me with an impatient gesture. "I must lower the tone of that insulting Frenchman before I depart. He is my guest, but he has outraged hospitality, and I were unworthy the name of man if I submitted to his jeers. Take him the message."

"With pleasure," said I. "But how can I appoint time and place for a hostile meeting when your travelling carriage is at the door, waiting to bear you on a distant journey? You will necessarily be surrounded by your friends till the moment of your departure."

"Not so. If he has the common bravery of a Frenchman, he will accommodate himself to the circumstances when he knows the necessity of instant action. The arrival of a party of gendarmerie, and the arrest of a fugitive from justice in the court-yard of the café, has drawn the attention of the household and of their visitors. The garden is deserted—a few minutes will settle our business, and——"

"True—true—but the weapons?"

"I will endeavour to procure them, while you bring the Frenchman to the meeting."

Again I ascended the stairs and hastened to execute my errand. I called St. Vau from the

room, and repeated Harrington's challenge; he turned pale, and spoke of being able to explain the mistake. My indignant repetition of the message convinced him that we were in earnest—he accepted the meeting, but demanded time for the selection of a friend, and the usual privilege of the challenged, the choice of weapons. I agreed to his terms, giving him ten minutes to meet me and my principal at the farthest end of the garden at the back of the café. We descended the stairs together; he turned towards the main entrance from the street, and I made my way to the rear in search of my friend. In less than a minute, and before I had gained Harrington's presence, St. Vau followed me down the side alley of the garden, and seemed in the utmost perturbation, looking back as if he dreaded pursuit, and dodging from one side of the walk to the other as the shrubs promised the greatest shelter. I hailed him as Harrington approached.

"Messieurs, this meeting cannot take place to-day. I am unable to leave the café—in search of a friend, I mean; the weapons are not attainable, and I have business of vital importance elsewhere."

"Must an Englishman disgrace himself by personal outrage to induce a Frenchman to give him honourable satisfaction? If M. St. Vau will forego his right of choice, we can easily obtain weapons. A party of gendarmerie have possession of the café; the officer is in private conversation with the landlord, and the men, while drinking with M. de Robichon in honour of the fête, have piled their carbines in the corner of the hall; we can easily secure a couple of them, and settle this matter on the instant."

St. Vau eagerly agreed to Harrington's proposition. I undertook to filch the guns, and started for that purpose, with a suggestion from St. Vau that I should bring as many as I could carry, as they would be useful to us in the necessity of a second shot, being without powder and ball to reload.

Fortune kindly favoured my attempt. I succeeded in securing six of the carbines without attracting the attention of the gendarmes, although the loud repetition of our names throughout the house by various of the guests, proved that our absence had been observed.

"Capital!" said St. Vau; "I hope the pieces are all loaded;" and as I deposited the arms on a small refreshment table, he adroitly pulled back the hammer of each carbine, and removed the priming powder from the pan. Five of the guns were served in this way ere we had time to interfere, when snatching the sixth from my grasp, he placed it on full cock, and said with his customary sneer—

"Messieurs will now admit the truth of my declaration that the required meeting cannot take place this day. Harrington, be a good boy, and go back to your wife. The game is in my hands, but my respect for my old flame Guillelmine forbids me spoiling the beauty of her useful spouse."

"Cowardly scoundrel!" exclaimed Harrington, striking St. Vau several violent blows across the

face with the riding whip which I had placed in his hands when I went for the carbines. St. Vau said not a word; the blood rushed to his face with such impetuosity that his veins became purple, and the wales made by the lash stood out in bold relief like thick, black ropes. He retreated a few steps, and raising the gun to his shoulder, took a deliberate aim at Harrington, who stood unflinchingly before him, and seemed to court the certainty of death. A paralysis of wonder—of fear, if you will—came over me, and I stirred not to interfere with the commission of the murderous act. But St. Vau suddenly dropped the weapon from its level, and said, in a low, calm voice—

“The report may bring those about me I wish to avoid. My revenge will keep, and I swear to you, James Harrington, by every thing which men consider holy, that I will cause a deeper anguish in that heart of thine than can be given by any festering wound by bullet or by knife.”

He turned to leave the walk. An officer of the gendarmerie stepped from the shrubbery, and said—

“Gustave St. Vau, alias Comte de Fleury, alias Robert Patterson, I arrest you on a charge of forgery.”

“Stand back, sir! By the living God, I will not be taken alive. I am armed, and the majority of your men’s weapons are useless, thanks to the good nature of my friends here. Move another step, and I fire.”

“Do so, if you wish it,” exclaimed the officer, calmly beckoning to his men to advance. “The carbines are charged with blank cartridge merely, while my pistols are loaded with two balls each. Does Monsieur wish to test the fact?”

St. Vau dropped his arms, and was instantly pinioned by the gens d’armes. The officer’s coolness saved the emission of blood, for the carbine was loaded with slugs.

The whole of the marriage party crowded the walk. St. Vau’s crime was publicly proclaimed, and his former friends were the first to rail at his iniquity. The bride flung herself on Harrington’s neck; her parents assailed him with angry expostulations; the brother demanded an explanation, which the bridegroom vainly attempted to furnish. I turned from the scene of noise, and strolled leisurely down another part of the garden, reaching the main entrance time enough to receive a parting salute from Harrington, with a deprecatory shrug of his shoulders, as he drove off with his weeping bride on his contemplated trip for the honeymoon, and to receive a nod of defiance from the disgraced chevalier as he wended on his way to the jail, with a tolerable certainty of the gallies in perspective.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

NEWGATE, LONDON.—THE SHERIFF’S TABLE.

“Yes, gentlemen, I assure you that my unfortu-

nate clients, who, on Monday morning, expiate their offences against the law, *sus. per col.*, are positively of the very first respectability. In fact, I consider it the most interesting execution of the season. We are in the habit of having a few friends around us on such occasions. The present incumbent of the shrievalty is a perfect gentleman, and places a very comfortable breakfast upon the table of his private room in the jail, and with considerate kindness, the refreshment is always ready to the moment when I retire from the scaffold. When I hear the functionary Ketch withdraw the fatal bolt, I have the consolation of knowing that the turnkey is pouring out my chocolate. My card is the *passee-partout* to any part of his majesty’s jail of Newgate—allow me to offer you one a-piece, and I flatter myself, gentlemen, you will not repent your visit. Remember, we ‘drop’ at eight and cut down at nine. Adieu.”

Such was the language of the polite and reverend gentleman who, some twenty years ago, filled the situation of chaplain, or “ordinary,” as it was then termed, to Newgate jail. He addressed the assembled felons every Sunday, in the prison chapel, in mild and soothing terms;—no threats of everlasting hell, no “brimstone denunciations,” as he called the dissenting ministers’ awful pictures of divine wrath, pained the minds of the death-condemned under his spiritual control. When he attended the last moments of the malefactor on the public scaffold, he paid the strictest attention to the minutæ of the toilet; his hair was beautifully curled; his band and surplice were clean and glossy; he held the prayer-book with a stainless pair of white kid gloves, and in a bland and winning tone of voice, he politely invited the sinner to repentance. He gave the fearful signal to the hangman by waving a highly perfumed handkerchief of the finest lawn; and while his “clients,” as he termed the condemned felons, were struggling with the death-choke, he calmly descended to his breakfast, satisfied that he had discharged his duties in the most gentlemanly manner.

It is but justice to add to the above sketch of a veritable character, that his services were ever at the command of the humblest criminal. Many a cheerless night has he passed in the damp cell of the doomed, quieting the remorse of the conscience-torn, and awakening hope, by the blandness of his tones, in the minds of the most forlorn. He readily supplied the prison-wants of the destitute from his own means, and was indefatigable in attending to the worldly welfare of the relatives left helpless by the victims of the law. He was exceedingly popular with the authorities; and it was universally remarked by the *habitués* of the prison, that his “clients” met their fate with greater resignation and with a fuller hope of pardon hereafter, than those criminals who had been attended by the severer professors of piety foisted on them by overzealous friends. Many a time, when the harshness of the dissenting minister had almost extinguished the faint expectancy of heavenly pardon from the

mind of the agonized but repentant wretch who was without hope on earth, the well-meaning turnkey has introduced the jail chaplain to the cell from whence fanaticism had expelled him, and, in a few short hours, the poor criminal would be awakened from the bitter depths of his despair, and the howlings of the damned ceased to ring in his ears. The soothing nature of the ordinary's voice was particularly adapted to the fine prayers contained in the ritual of the Episcopal church, abounding in assurances of the saving love of the Almighty for his erring people. Again, a few kind inquiries respecting the criminal's worldly matters; offers and assurances of help to some wretched wife, some destitute babe or aged parent, left helpless by the execution of the law, would find its way into the heart of the most obdurate. In fact, the polite parson was the firm hope of the felon, the friend of the friendless. To him was extended the last and the most fervent farewell in this world, of many a bruised heart whose dying moments he has comforted, whose bosom he has dilated with hopes of pardon in the world to come.

At that time, the penal code of England was written in characters of blood. In the metropolis, the execution of criminals was a matter of weekly occurrence. Crimes, now punishable by imprisonment or expatriation, were then certain to be atoned in death. The Bank of England never forgave the forgery of its paper, and, sanctioned by the law, exacted the penalty of death from all persons in any way associated with the offence. Circumstances of a distressing nature connected with the sentence of a mere youth found guilty of passing counterfeit notes, who was one of the "respectable" clients mentioned by the chaplain in his invitation, determined me to be present at the execution, if not at the sheriff's breakfast afterwards.

I was at the prison-door by six o'clock on Monday morning, and on presenting the chaplain's card to the turnkey, was advised by him to call at the reverend gentleman's house, which immediately adjoined the jail. Whilst waiting for an answer to my knock, I observed that the gallows or drop was then being wheeled from out the press-yard (so called from its having been the place where the punishment of pressing to death was inflicted on those prisoners who refused to plead), to its situation in front of the debtors' door of Newgate. At that early hour, crowds of anxious gazers filled the windows of the neighbouring houses, and hundreds of men, boys and women, were thronging the area in front of the jail, and hastening from the adjacent avenues. A smart footman belonging to the chaplain informed me that his master, after preaching the condemned sermon on Sunday morning, had passed the rest of the day and the whole of the night in the condemned cells, but that *he would certainly return home to dress before the execution took place!*

"You seem anxious to get within the prison, sir," said the footman, with a politeness naturally resulting from attendance on the parson. "The

sheriff is in the parlour; he has been taking a short nap upon the sofa, after being up best part of the night with the men who are going to be hanged, and if he knows you're a friend of master's, he'll take you across the press-yard to the prison at once."

A portly man, with small but active black eyes, and a round bald head, stepped from the parlour at that instant, and corroborated the servant's words. In five minutes we were within the walls of Newgate.

"Brown, let the ordinary know that I am here. Are my men in readiness?"

"Yes, sir. The boy's mother has been hanging about all night, begging to see her child once more."

"You did not admit her?"

"No, sir, not to the cell. I obeyed orders, but I couldn't keep the poor creature at the door in the rain, so my wife's got her in our room over a cup of tea and a bit of toast."

"Quite right, Brown; keep her there till it's all over. She has already bid him good-by, and if they were to meet again, I do believe he would be unable to walk to the drop. There will be an immense crowd, and we shall have several very respectable people here inside; every thing must go off well and quietly. Tell my man to roast another pair of fowls, and put half a dozen more cups and saucers on the table."

"I will, sir."

"I am afraid that the little business details of a matter as solemn as an execution must appear strange and forbidding in your eyes, my dear sir, but use makes all things familiar. The rapid increase of crime and the severity of our judges have given me a most unpleasant intimacy with the formula of a hanging match, as it is called; and this morning—but I suppose your reverend friend made you familiar with the facts connected with the subjects of to-day's execution?"

"No; he spoke in general terms of its interesting character, merely."

"Oh, yes; *interesting!*—that is so like him—not but what there is a peculiarity in the history of each of the four subjects, I confess. The poor fellows are gentlemen in birth and bearing—one of them is a general favourite—a bold, dashing, agreeable rattle-pate, who looks upon death as a just debt, and is prepared to honour the demand when due. His crime is trivial—the purchase of some stolen property—but he is a returned transport, and that in itself is an offence which always meets the extreme rigour of the law. Should the government be known to wink at an escape from a penal settlement, authority would be at an end in our Australian colonies."

"What was the offence for which he suffered transportation?"

"The felonious possession of some jewelry. He has a brother, an officer of some rank in the army—but that is one of our little secrets, which you will be kind enough not to mention. The

brother's interest, backed by the exertions of some of our most influential men, who have taken a sort of liking to the fellow for his excellent convivial qualities, (he certainly does sing a capital song,) procured him a side offer from a certain quarter that if he would give up the names of the persons who aided him in his escape from Port Jackson, and freely recount the means of his getting away, his life would be spared, but he must volunteer into the condemned regiment, and start for India forthwith."

"And he did not accept the offer?"

"His answer was characteristic—swamp-fighting with the natives beneath the burning sun of India was little better than building fortifications at Botany Bay; and as for revealing the names of his friends there who assisted his escape, it was impossible—he had given them his honour as a gentleman, and his majesty couldn't expect him to forfeit his word.

"The next case is a pitiable one. You must remember the particulars of W——'s arrest, who, in his early settlement with his factor, passed off a promissory note for the small sum of fifty pounds with a forged endorsement. No one believes that fraud was intended—the terms of payment with his factor were positive as to time and amount—he had expended his means, and was yet fifty pounds deficient. He held two genuine notes with the same endorsement, for the same small sum, and he doubtless meant to redeem the false note with the true. But the interchange of securities between banking houses brought the three notes under the notice of the gentleman whose name had been used, and poor W—— was denounced. He leaves an amiable wife, an invalid sister, and five small children entirely destitute."

"Has no interest been used, no exertion made to mitigate his sentence?"

"None. It would be useless. The mercantile world is at this period very justly incensed at the prevalence of fraud in monetary transactions. The failure of several bankers, the extensive forgeries of some, and the flight of others, equally criminal but more fortunate, compel a severity of sentence on the poor devil first convicted. W—— is doomed to be hung, not because his crime deserves it, but because the security of trade demands a victim."

"You made mention just now of a boy—one of the sufferers to-day?"

"Yes; he is but just turned eighteen—old enough in the eyes of the law to inherit the awful responsibility of crime, but not old enough to inherit property. He is not recognized by the law as capable of transacting business or marriage, yet the law claims its victim, even to the rendering of his life, for the violation of its edict. This poor youth, suffering the extremest poverty, was detected passing a counterfeit one pound note. He might just as well have committed murder, for his punishment is quite as sure. His mother, a widow of decayed gentility, is almost frantic at the loss of her darling. There was a sweetheart, a beautiful girl, who

visited him in prison once or twice; her pride has not allowed her to see him since his conviction, but the mother's love is constant to the end."

"And the fourth and last in this sad catalogue?"

"Is the murderer who was tried on Friday last. We always hang for murder on a Monday—the law providing in such matters that forty-eight hours must not elapse between sentence and execution. By having the trial on a Friday, we give the guilty one the benefit of Sunday, which, as it is a *dies non*, does not evade the law. We seldom hang other criminals on the same days with murderers, but we have a heavy condemned list this session, and must hang twice a week for a month to come."

"Is there any peculiarity in this murder case?"

"No. A simple stabbing matter, in one of the lowest haunts of infamy. The slain was a common sailor, and the provocation was not proved. The murderer is an intelligent man, and has doubtless seen better days. He does not repent his crime, and is perfectly resigned. I know not whether he is an Englishman—he speaks several languages fluently, but he seems to be without a friend in the world."

The mellifluous tones of the chaplain's voice were heard in the arched passage leading to the cells, and in another moment he entered the keeper's room where we had been conversing, introducing several other visitors to our notice in his usual bland and courteous style.

"Ah, my good friend, how kind to favour me with your society thus early. Excuse my frightful deshabelle, but I have been for twenty hours sedulously engaged in prayer. Sheriff, I know you sent for those Epping sausages to please me; believe me I thoroughly appreciate the value of your friendship. My poor clients, they have sadly tired me; but I am well repaid, for I have left them comfortable and happy—yes, happy as new born babes. My dear friend P., you said last week that your newly married daughter found it difficult to procure a confidential housekeeper. I have found one who will suit exactly. It is the mother of my youngest client, sheriff—she who is now weeping so bitterly in Brown's room. I will be answerable for her honesty. By the way, my dear Brown, tell your amiable wife to have a good cup of strong green tea for me this morning, not chocolate—my nerves require a bracer. Alderman H., can you in any way obtain me a couple of presentations to Christ's Hospital? I have two spirited little fellows whom I wish to place in that excellent school—the sons of my client W. I have promised him as much, and you won't let me break my word. Thank you, my dear friend—the father will die happy. Gentlemen, I must leave you for half an hour. I dare not appear before the public in this soiled attire. Sheriff, perhaps our friends would feel a pleasure in visiting my clients before they leave the cells—we have yet an hour good. Brown, my dear fellow, mind the chairs are dusted clean; and be sure not to let the rolls get cold. I trust that the functionary Ketch has every thing in readiness."

With half a dozen graceful bows, this eccentric but really humane chaplain departed to accomplish a severe toilet, that he might with propriety appear in his public part of the revolting drama about to be enacted. Agreeable to his suggestion, we rose to visit the condemned cells, to gratify a mean and morbid curiosity by gazing on our fellow-creatures in their last hour of helpless misery and shame. The first cell we arrived at contained the murderer and the returned convict—the latter was attiring himself in an elegant suit of black. He shook hands with us all with much alacrity; there was a smile upon his handsome but sensual features, though his nostrils were distended, and his eyeballs were suffused with blood. The murderer was on the floor of the cell with his face buried in his folded arms. At the bidding of the sheriff, he sprang to his feet, and his irons clanked heavily as he rose. In spite of his cadaverous look, his matted hair and beard, his sunken eyes, his bloodless lip and mean attire, I recognized at the first glance my friend Harrington, the husband of the lovely Guillelmine!

Words cannot depict my surprise, my grief. I had left him but a few short months back in the gratified possession of wealth, reputation and a troop of friends; and now to meet with him under a false name, chained in a felon's cell, deserted by all, and on the eve of a disgraceful death! Was he guilty? Yes! Where were his friends, his uncle and partner, his wife? He answered me not.

The sheriff, giving me a glance of intelligence, left the cell, taking with him all the visitors and his pet criminal, the returned convict. Harrington again embraced me, and we sat down on the stone bench, with our hands clasped in each other.

"I must make my story brief, for my minutes are numbered—the next sound which the world hears from the iron tongue of ancient Chronos will signal forth my death. We have met strangely enough, and you must, therefore, learn why I dipped my hands in blood. I care not that the world should know my motives. You left me on my wedding-day, some eighteen months ago. It is hardly worth while to apologize now for my abrupt departure on that day—my friends advised it, and I was glad to hasten from the disgusting scene. Well, my wife easily persuaded me that St. Vau's attentions were harmless as those of a brother. I readily believed her, for I loved with a madman's fondness. Yes—weak and childish as she was, her beauty mastered my soul. For a year, I tasted happiness as ample as the human heart can bear. Guillelmine presented me with a child, and I passed hours of dreamy rapture in contemplating the features of my infant boy. Now listen, and see how fearfully I have paid for this short-lived bliss.

"Six months ago—yes, six short months—and in that little space I have lived a long, long life of suffering and care—six months ago, St. Vau escaped from the galleys, and I was informed by my wife's maid that she was in the habit of meeting him at an obscure house in the suburbs of the

city. I informed the police of St. Vau's whereabouts, and again was this daring adventurer confined. I said not a word of the matter to my wife, hoping by a constant exertion of tenderness and love to wean her mind from this errant propensity which I refused to believe was tinged with the slightest shade of guilt. I was miserably deceived. Again St. Vau escaped, and this time my wife became the partner of his flight, taking with her a large amount of cash and jewelry, and, worse than all, her child, my worshipped infant boy.

"I felt the blow severely—but my pride was hurt, and I knew that I ought to despise and not regret the woman who could abandon her happy home to become the mistress of a galley-slave. A few weeks passed, I know not how, when intelligence was conveyed to me that the scoundrelly seducer had already tired of his victim; and, wishing to fill her place with a new object, he thrust her forth one wintry night, and the mother and the babe perished miserably in the storm. My rage then became ungovernable; my own wrongs, mighty as they were, seemed as nothing to the murder of my wife and child. Guillelmine was young, weak and trusting in her nature; she had never loved me—her parents had sacrificed her to assist their position in society—but St. Vau, the object of her maiden fancy, for whom she had given up all—her husband, home, name, fame—my babe, too, whose little voice seemed crying from the grave for vengeance—I grow mad, now, while I think of it!

"Well, well," he resumed, after a painful struggle, "I devoted him to death, and set about the work with deliberate preparation. I knew I had no common man to deal with. In disguise, I tracked him to his haunts, and in the depths of a Bohemian forest, in the very cottage from whence poor Guillelmine was spurned, I shot him as he sat in dalliance with his new-found wanton. I saw him fall, and believed that I had avenged my wife and child. No! the devil that he served had turned the ball aside from a vital part, and he recovered. I followed him to Spain, and there, by his machinations, I was thrown into jail. But I escaped, no matter how, and again was on his track. After a weary journey, I met with him in Rome, and just as I deemed my vengeance certain, he was arrested for some of his mal-practices, and once more I was foiled. The police of the imperial city could not expect to keep secure the cunning villain who had repeatedly foiled the chiefest agents of the French bureau. Once more he regained his liberty, and for some time all traces of him were lost. It struck me that as few parts of the continent were safe for him, he would be likely to visit England. I arrived here a few weeks back. In the lowest sinks of vice, in the illuminated saloons of the gambler's clubs, in the crowded streets by day, and in the secret midnight den of crime, I sought for my victim. I met with him at last in a low drinking house, disguised as a sailor, and surrounded by a crowd of coarse, revolting men. I drove my knife

into his heart without a word, and before I was carried to jail, knew that his vile spirit had departed from the earth.

"I am summoned to my death. The excitement of revenge has passed away, and in the dark solitude of these stone cells, I have had ample time to muse upon my deeds, and I now declare, while standing on the verge of eternity, that a shadow of remorse has never crossed my mind. The law could not have administered justice in my case, but it demands my life to cover its own deficiency. So let it be. The clergyman of the jail tells me that I have made my peace with Heaven. I am yet to learn that I had offended it!"

The sheriff returned, dressed in his gayest robes of office, and carrying a long white wand in his hand, as if he was about to usher his sovereign to a seat at some civic festivity instead of waiting to see the dread vengeance of the law executed upon suffering mortality. Several of his attendants crowded at his heels. Harrington was removed, with his fellow-sufferers, to the lower lobby or hall of the jail, where the rest of the visitors awaited us. Here the condemned were pinioned and prepared for the fatal drop. Harrington, as a murderer, was the only one in chains; and while the prison smith removed the rivets of his fetters, the "oily man of God" whispered peace and pardon in his ear. One of the executioner's assistants was removing the cravat of a middle-aged man, whose look of utter and indescribable horror haunts me even now; his quick, keen eye glanced among the crowd as if it dreaded meeting the recognition of an acquaintance. When the hangman's cords were placed about his arms, he shuddered violently, and clasping his pinioned hands, he raised his eyes to heaven and muttered an inaudible prayer—yet such was the play of his features from the depths of his anguish, that it would not have been ridiculous to suppose that the heart-broken husband and father was making mouths at Heaven for the apparent injustice of its dispensations.

The youth who was to lose his life for the paltry matter of twenty shillings, reclined almost senseless in the arms of the keeper of the jail. Poor boy! his light hair and soft blue eye, his round and polished throat, his look of extreme youth and positive guilelessness of manner, seemed strangely to accord with a violent death as a punishment for crime. The sheriff tried to comfort him; he gasped an inarticulate reply. The chaplain whispered to the keeper, and in a moment, a small glass of cordial was administered to the almost prostrate youth with such effect, that he was soon enabled to converse with the sheriff, and walk erect to and on the scaffold.

The death procession was marshaled, and the voice of the chaplain sounded painfully musical in that damp and echoing arch, as he proclaimed aloud "the resurrection and the life." The returned transport was the first to mount the drop; he ascended the stairs, with a firm step, amid the regrets of the visitors and the muttered sorrow of the

jail officials. He bowed respectfully to the multitudinous crowd, and was received with a marked emotion. The merchant who had committed forgery was the next; and in respect to his previous character, to his bereaved family, and the fearful sadness of his look, the agitated mass at once removed their hats, and a sad, funereal silence reigned throughout the street. The boy was handed up; the cordial draught had given a transient animation to his eye, and a hectic flush bloomed in his cheek. He bounded on to the scaffold as a schoolboy would jump in his play ground, but the sight of that immense multitude dismayed him, even in his false excitement, and he burst into tears. Yells of indignation burst from the mob—loud cries of "Shame! reprieve! remove the boy! murder!" were mixed with women's screams and reprobate curses. The vast mass heaved to and fro, and the executioner trembled as he fixed the rope around the lost child's neck.

"Quick, here," said the sheriff from the scaffold; "send up the other prisoner: we must put an end to this."

Harrington turned towards me, and with a calmer manner than any spectator there could boast, said—"It is scarcely worth while to mention my fate to the Robichons; the old man has quite enough to bear as it is. God bless you, and sometimes honour my memory with your thoughts." His appearance on the drop turned the attention of the multitude from the boy, and execrations were loudly shouted against the murderer. Harrington smiled, as I was afterwards told; the cap was drawn over his face, the chaplain gave the signal, the drop fell, and four of my fellow-creatures were deprived of life.

I felt the blood creeping with a stinging sensation through every vein; a stunning weight seemed overwhelming my brain, and I was on the point of falling, when I was seized by the arm, and the chaplain whispered, in his softest voice—"We'll not let the sausages get cold!"

The transition was grossly, foolishly abrupt—but *we went to breakfast*. One or two of the guests felt faint and sickly for a moment, but they were laughed at by the sheriff and patted on the back by the polite parson, who recommended a glass of cogniac as a remedy, and practised the precept he gave. The loss experienced by the widowed mother and her five helpless children was mixed up with roast chicken and another cup of tea. The tenderness of the steaks and the boy's fondness for his parent were praised in the same breath. The sheriff retailed the death joke of the returned convict with much glee; this led to the recounting of sundry jests uttered on various occasions by the hangman, who was considered a sort of prison jester. In a quarter of an hour, ere yet the hanging men were free from the spasmodic lingerings of death, good humour reigned triumphant at the jail breakfast; the sheriff complimented the chaplain on the quiet behaviour of his clients; and, in return, the clerical functionary praised the execu-

tive arrangements; and, as he pushed back his plate, crowded with the *disjecta membra epuli*, he wiped the unctuousity of the Epping delicacies from

his lips, and turning up his eyes with an expression of meekness, said—"It was, indeed, a morning's work of which he was justly proud!"

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